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The Role of Mythology in Schelling's Late Philosophy

Louis Dupré / Yale University

A study of Schelling's late philosophy of mythology, despite the renewed interest it presently enjoys, still needs some justification. Why should we spend time and effort on a demanding philosophical text based on often outdated and inadequate historical information about myths? And why revisit a philosophy that claims to incorporate revelation, yet has been criticized for bending revelation to its own preestablished concepts, while in the process corrupting the methods of theology as well as of philosophy? The answer may be brief. Because Schelling (1775–1854) was among the first to recognize the myth as an independent form of consciousness, irreducible to rational thought or to a prescientific interpretation of nature or history. For him, mythology constituted an essentially religious phenomenon, marked by polytheism but indispensable for the rise of an inclusive monotheism, that is, to an idea of God that incorporates creation within God's Being. Despite the undeniable flaws of his work and the enormous progress since made in this area, no one has yet surpassed the scope and intellectual depth of the two-volume treatise on myth written during the final twenty years of Schelling's career. Schelling understood that neither mythology nor revelation could be simply juxtaposed to philosophical truth. The two had to be integrated or one would inevitably exclude the other.

A first extensive discussion of mythology appears in the lectures on the *Philosophy of Art* delivered in Jena 1802–3 and repeated in Würzburg (1804–5).¹ Following August Wilhelm Schlegel's *Lectures on Mythology*,

¹ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling (Stuttgart and Augsburg: Cotta Verlag, 1856–59), vol. 5; in English, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989). The page numbers of this translation appear after the references to the German text. Other works referred to in this article are *Einführung in die Philosophie der Mythologie*, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, pt. 2, vol. 1, commonly indicated as vol. 11; *Philosophie der Mythologie*, pt. 2, vol. 2, indicated as vol. 12; *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, pt. 2, vols. 3 and 4, or vols. 13 and 14.

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he limited the subject mainly to Greek myths because of their superior aesthetic quality (5:392). But the harmony between finite form and infinite content of Greek mythology weakened its religious significance. Philosophy eventually took over part of the religious function of the myth. On this and on several other issues Schelling was to change the views expressed in the *Philosophy of Art*. Since our subject is mythology rather than art, we move directly to the great works that Schelling composed during his final years of teaching. His perspective here is exclusively religious and differs from the vaguely pantheistic philosophy of identity to which the *Philosophy of Art* belongs.

In the so-called positive philosophy of his later years, Schelling abandoned the fundamental principle of his earlier idealism, that the mind itself contains the Absolute. The philosophical idea of absolute Being does indeed imply an intrinsic necessity. But such an ideal necessity contains neither real existence nor positive content. A philosophy built upon it could be no more than "negative." Only the Absolute itself is able to convert the idea of *what must be* into the reality of *what actually is*. Negative philosophy, though indispensable for understanding the mind's relation to the Absolute, merely forms an introduction to the positive philosophy, according to which the Absolute communicates itself in mythology and revelation.

Schelling refers to the God of philosophy as Being itself (*ens ipsum*). Such a definition conveys no information about God's nature or about God's relation to other beings. (What complicates Schelling's argument is that he uses the term *Being* indistinguishably for *essence* and *existence*. The reader is frequently forced to figure out from the context which one is intended.) But if God is Being itself, all beings must be included in the idea of God. To close the gap of its ignorance about God, philosophy cannot afford to ignore the content of a possible revelation. It ought to analyze the concept of revelation as it has historically presented itself in various religions. The task of positive philosophy consists in seeking to understand the logic of revelation and mythology. It ought to subject the reports of them to a critical investigation. At least they reveal the presence of a fundamental human need for an intimate acquaintance with the Godhead as well as of a belief that this need has actually been met. The purpose, then, of Schelling's philosophy of myth and revelation is not to "prove" the existence of God or the supernatural nature of the alleged "facts" of revelation, but to show their ideal structures.

Has Schelling not left the domain of philosophy altogether and entered that of theology? How could an alleged manifestation of a reality that lies beyond the reach of the autonomous mind ever become a

subject of philosophy? He himself concedes: "Most people understand by philosophy a science which reason purely and simply generates out of itself. From that standpoint, it is natural enough to consider the philosophy of revelation an attempt to present the ideas of revealed religion as necessary, pure truths of reason or to reduce them to those" (14:4). To be sure, positive philosophy cannot be justified within the restrictions traditionally imposed on philosophical thought. But the question remains whether these restrictions are valid. Why should philosophy not investigate the "logic" of mythology and revelation, as it does with other empirical data? Without a positive philosophy, ultimate metaphysical questions concerning the relation between the Absolute and that of which it is the ground must remain unanswered.

For Schelling, mythology constitutes part of revelation, even though it requires no supernatural intervention. Myths are natural processes that awaken the mind to full self-consciousness. They also prepare the mind's ability to receive a "supernatural" revelation. Schelling's position considerably differs from that of later students of mythology. To Paul Tillich, for instance, mythical thinking constitutes an early view of reality, which eventually will break down into a variety of fields: science, metaphysics, and religion. Rationalist philosophers of the early twentieth century considered mythical thought a defective, prescientific way of thinking, which contains no truth, but served as an early substitute for science.

In Schelling's view, the myth belongs neither to science nor to philosophy. It is an early but essential stage of the religious consciousness. He restricted the mythical field to the genealogies of the gods, as recorded in civilizations of the Near East. At a first stage of religion, the sacred is not yet clearly differentiated from the nonsacred. It is followed by a long period of polytheism, indispensable for preparing the idea of one God inclusive of all reality. Without mythical polytheism the mind would never surpass the inclination to oppose God to all other forms of being, as dogmatic theology still often continues to do.

Schelling assumes that all myths follow a similar course, though not all complete the entire process. A complete cycle passes through three stages. Yet some barely move beyond the first. He bases his analysis on the theory of the three potencies (*Potenzen*), which dominates his entire later metaphysics. The potencies are neither palpable realities nor abstract concepts, but real and effective (*wirkliche*) powers that hold the middle between concrete and abstract concepts. "They are true universals, yet at the same time full realities" (*Philosophie der Mythologie*, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, 12:115). In the *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (1830, but published only in 1989) Schelling describes them as the conditions of

Being. They raise fundamental metaphysical questions. What preceded Being? What is needed for Being to be? Negative philosophy is unable to answer those questions. Hegel started his *Logic* with the concept of Being. Positive philosophy commences with the conditions of the possibility of Being.

Schelling distinguishes three such conditions, or, as he calls them, three metaphysical potencies. (A) First is the sheer possibility of Being (*das Seinkönnen*). This expression becomes intelligible only if one assumes, with Fichte and Schelling, that a transcendent *will* must precede actual Being. The first potency consists of a preontological drive that renders Being not only possible but imperative: it is that which must be (*das Sein-müssende*). (B) An unconditioned obedience to this call would give rise to Being without limits. This blind Being would destroy any possibility of being *this* or *that*. It would simply overwhelm the receptive *A* moment in such a way that no differentiation, no particular reality, and no freedom could ever exist. *B* would suppress *A* altogether. For that reason Schelling calls the unrestricted second potency *what ought not to be* (*das nicht-sein-sollende*). Hence, for the existence of concrete reality, a third condition must be fulfilled to limit the impact of *B* and render it compatible with *A*. (C) The third potency, then, consists in a capacity of reflection, an ability of the receptive subject to withdraw into itself and thereby to preserve its freedom to be *this* and not *that*. This third potency restricts *B*'s undifferentiated power: *B* still remains the ground of differentiated reality, but it ceases to obliterate it. Schelling refers to the outcome of the third potency as *das als-solches-Seinkönnende* (what can exist as such) or also *das als-solches Seiendes*, which we might translate as Being within the limits of essence (*Wesen*).

It is important to remember that the potencies are not moments of Being, but *conditions*. Hence the undifferentiated infinite Being of the *B* potency must not be equated with God's Being. Whereas God's Being is endowed with an infinite number of attributes, the second potency is merely indefinite and blind. The preceding description of the potencies appears in the recently published first version of the *Philosophy of Revelation* (written in 1831). Obscure as it may be, it is still clearer than any of the later versions.² The general pattern of the potencies returns at every stage of the positive philosophy, each time assuming different features.

In the entire philosophy of revelation (which includes mythology) the theory of the potencies plays a significant part. Schelling denies

² Friedrich Schelling, *Urfassung der Philosophie der Offenbarung* (1831), ed. Walter Erhardt (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1992), 27–37.

that a purely logical philosophy (exclusive of revelation) is able to think the transition from undifferentiated Being (*B*) to concrete, particular Being (*C*). Negative philosophy conceives of Being as an empty infinite. But how can the finite be, if Being can be thought only as infinite?³ Instead, a positive philosophy, receptive of mythology and revelation, conceives of God as infinite Being endowed with, yet not divided by, determinate attributes revealed in mythology. Without this revelation, Schelling implies, metaphysics is unable to answer its most fundamental question: Why is there Being (as we know it, i.e., differentiated) rather than nothing? Parmenides, our first great metaphysician, consistently excluded the possibility of differentiated Being. To him, finitude and determination were mere illusions, forms of non-Being. Schelling argues that, after negative philosophy establishes the undifferentiated idea of Being, the justification of differentiated reality still requires an idea of the Absolute as including internal determinations, without which it would not be able to function as ground for the existence of particular realities. Negative philosophy is unable to provide such an idea. For that reason Schelling declares it inadequate for dealing with the relation between God and the finite.

Only from the revelation of the Absolute in mythology does philosophy learn that the Absolute possesses internal determinations that it expresses in finite beings endowed with an independent existence. Because all beings remain immanent in the all-encompassing Absolute, archaic speculation conceives of the Absolute as being itself a plurality. Hence the rise of polytheism. In the mythological process the potencies present the stages of the mind's process toward full God-consciousness, which coincides with full self-consciousness. As the mind gradually discovers the notion of a totality of Being, it first imagines this all-embracing totality in the primitive picture of a primary god. Schelling calls this mythical representation a negative concept: it possesses no inner truth and functions as a substitute for the real (i.e., self-differentiated) Absolute. It is what is not (*das Nicht-Seiende*) and, in its relation to the first potency of consciousness, what ought not to be (*das nicht-Sein-sollende*).

Mythology, in Schelling's interpretation, represents the opposition between the multiple finite and the all-comprehensive but indefinite one as a struggle between gods. The mythical mind seeks reconciliation, but seldom finds it. Whenever it succeeds, it usually presents the reconciliation between the infinite and the finite in the form of a young

³ Friedrich Schelling, *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (1830), ed. Walter Ehrhardt (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1989), 98–100. See Peter Koslowski, *Philosophien der Offenbarung* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 2001), 603–4.

god who comes to share the lot of suffering humanity and thereby to redeem the race. In the end he becomes victorious over the oppressive old god and restores the autonomy of the finite.

In the *Philosophy of Mythology*, then, Schelling describes the historical process through which the mind becomes aware of itself and of its transcendent dimension. Though the process is divinely guided, the mind must rely entirely on its natural powers. The key to the religious significance of the myth lies in Schelling's concept of monotheism. In the past some scholars considered archaic religions that possessed no polytheistic pantheon to be "monotheistic." A few even assumed that a pristine revelation had preceded the spread of polytheism. The mythological process thereby came to be seen as a corruption of the primeval divine truth. Contrary to this opinion, Schelling maintained that polytheism, rather than implying a decline of the religious consciousness, constituted a necessary phase in the mind's ascent to a spiritual idea of God and to full self-recognition. The alleged monotheism was either a primitive kind of pantheism, too vague to distinguish between the sacred and the nonsacred, or a theological dualism that conceived of God as a Being opposed to all other beings. That dualism has survived in dogmatic theories of the modern age, which envision the link between God and the finite to be no more than an act of effective causality. Such a conception conflicts with the idea, admitted by the same theologians, that God is Being (*esse ipsum*) and, as such, must in some way include all that is.

In Schelling's view, the idea of God as Spirit, so strongly asserted in the fourth Gospel, requires a more intimate relation than that of causal dependence. As Spirit, God must be present in the inmost nature of His creatures. The intrinsic goal of polytheistic mythologies, then, served the purpose of reintegrating the multiplicity of creation within the divine unity. The mythological theogonies, far from being meaningless stories, prepare the mind for the acceptance of a true, that is, a differentiated monotheism. Still polytheism became necessary only because the mind had lost its primeval state of innocence. "Without an exodus from the original state of innocence, there would be no history. Therefore that first step of mankind is the primeval event" (13:385).

Originally the potencies maintained a relation of harmonious balance that the Fall disturbed. In the Fall—of its nature we know no more than about the period that preceded it—the human mind arrogated to itself control over the potencies (13:360–61). It thereby disrupted the mind's harmony with itself and with nature. Humans attempting to become "like God" fell into a condition of *Gottentfremdung*, which was also a state of *Selbstentfremdung* (alienation from God and from oneself). But

in accepting this state of alienation humanity would eventually rediscover the true God. Mythology describes the process of that return.

How did polytheism start? Schelling argues that the original condition of culture was no more monotheistic than polytheistic. One might describe it as pantheistic, were it not that premythical humans lacked the kind of reflectiveness that pantheism requires. Schelling pictures their condition as being dominated by the all-absorbing blind reality of the second potency. He refers to it as the reign of Uranos (the sky) who, according to Hesiod, was the oldest of the Greek gods. In giving this undetermined religious awareness the name of a Greek god the poet appears to make it part of a theogony, which it is not. The wandering nomads here presented, strangers to themselves and to the lands through which they passed, recognized no gods, not even the astral bodies that guided them on their ways. The stars merely served as beacons of light in an undifferentiated sacred space. Those "Sabists," as Schelling calls them, were monotheistic only insofar as their religion recognized no distinctions. Everything was sacred and hence nothing in particular was.

In the next stage—to which Uranos formed the transition—the (finite) principle of the first potency (A) rebels against this crushing weight of undifferentiated Being and starts a struggle for survival. In the language of theogony, the struggle ends with a weakening of the oppressor. The myth achieves this either by placing a female principle next to the oppressive male, or by having the male one castrated. Urania is the Greek name Herodotus, the fifth-century BC historian, gives to the goddess who at this point emerges everywhere in the Near East. Schelling describes the time of Urania as mostly one of peaceful co-existence between male and female divinities (13:392). Yet powerful goddesses such as Mylitta (in Assyria), Astarte, or Cybele (in Phrygia and Lydia) gradually deprived the male god of all his power. Eventually they achieved a total victory over the male god.

Greek mythology used a more drastic image for the feminization of Uranos. The autocratic god killed all Urania's children as soon as they were born. Yet Kronos, secretly born, conspired with his mother to emasculate his father. One version of the myth presented an even more radical account of the feminization. Kronos threw the genitals of his father into the ocean and out of the foam arose Aphrodite, a second female power, which further marginalized the oppressive male. Driven from his central position to the periphery, the autocratic single god is no longer capable of preventing the rise of divine multiplicity. The introduction of female deities has opened the door to a new line of gods. When Kronos, a more reflective representation of Uranos's blind

power, repeated the habits of his father and devoured his own children, Zeus, the son who had escaped his father's infanticidal drive, at the next birth of a sibling swathed a heavy stone in bandages and, in lieu of the infant, fed him to the voracious Kronos.

While the female gods merely weakened the power of the supreme male god in the mythologies of Egypt and Greece, Schelling claims (with insufficient evidence, I think) that in the Assyrian-Babylonian religions the goddesses simply replaced the male god. This dramatic revolution did not pass without causing a feeling of guilt in the people for having abandoned the old god. Schelling detects a symbol of half-hearted repentance in a selective form of temple prostitution described by Herodotus. On a day consecrated to Mylitta, the Assyrian goddess, married women had to surrender themselves, once in a lifetime, to the first man who asked them, at any price he offered. Thus the nation attempted to expiate its guilt for allowing itself to be seduced by the new goddess and thus to break the ancient covenant. Schelling compares the motivation of this custom with the charge of adultery by which the Hebrew prophets denounced Israel's turning to foreign gods. In the Book *Hosea* Yahweh even orders the prophet to marry a prostitute to denounce the people's adultery with other gods.

The female cults of the Near East were closely linked to the seasons of nature. Still Schelling rejects a naturalist reading of the myth, as if it merely symbolized fertility processes. Even the celebrations of the seasons had a spiritual significance, he argues. They prepared an awareness of God as all-encompassing Absolute. His interpretation follows an earlier, mainly Neoplatonic tradition. In his treatise of the Egyptian myth of Isis and Osiris, Plutarch wrote: "We oppose all those uncouth minds that so readily equate the activities of the gods either with seasonal changes in atmosphere, or with harvest, sowing, or labor in the fields. They speak of 'the burial of Osiris' when the seeding grain lies buried in the earth and of the 'resurrection and reappearance of Osiris' when the seeds begin to sprout" (*De Iside et Osiride*, 377B).

Nonetheless, the link with nature remained strong. As the religious consciousness advanced, representations of the divine moved up from lifeless structures (huge boulders or mountains) to animals whose sensitive awareness more directly reflects divine life (*ibid.*, 382A). Even the theologically progressive Egyptian mythology still abounds with animal symbols. Those primitive forms never disappear completely. The humanized Greek mythology continued to preserve sacred mountains, monsters, and hybrids, not to mention Zeus's animal disguises as a swan, a bull, or a serpent.

In areas where the female victory had been less than absolute or

where it was eventually overcome, a young male, either god or half-god, entered the scene as a liberator of the oppressed. He mediated between the gods and the people. In Greek mythology this mysterious figure, Dionysus, had been at work long before he received a name and a specific place in the theogony. A similar god appears in Egyptian, Persian, and Phoenician mythologies. Their behavior is identical. The young god first places himself in the service of the old god who, though relegated to the sidelines, retains much power, at least where he has not been replaced by divine matriarchies. Soon the old god comes to suspect him of undermining his authority and tests his loyalty by imposing dangerous tasks upon him. Such were the works of Heracles (a similar half-god, possibly of Phoenician origin). The servant survives his trials and, through the good works he has accomplished, wins the favor of the humans whose harsh lot he shared. Yet eventually he is killed and thereby pacifies the old god. When in some way he is brought back to life, the old god is finally forced to recognize the power of the newcomer, even though he may not acknowledge his divinity.

Convinced that all myths followed a common pattern, Schelling tended to equate the various mediating gods of the Near East with the Greek Dionysus. He followed Herodotus, who had referred to the Egyptian Osiris and to the Phoenician Melkarth as Dionysus. "As long as the first god, whom we also call the *real* god, absolutely closes himself to [the newcomer], the young one cannot appear as god, but only as an unintelligible middle-being between god and men. So he appears as the hidden god, negated and humbled, who must first merit his divinity" (13:394). To Schelling, this mediating god prophetically announces the God-man of revelation (13:347-45). In his famous poem "Brot und Wein," Hölderlin had in veiled terms compared Christ to Dionysus: he had come to proclaim the end of the ancient gods, but to comfort us of their absence, had left us his gifts. Schelling also regards the suffering and dying gods, Dionysus, Melkarth, and Osiris, as prophetic figures of Christ.

Mythology, then, had been indispensable for discovering the truth of monotheism. Yet misinterpreting its instrumental role, humans converted the potencies active in the mind's response to the Absolute into independent, divine substances. By thus turning the internal forces of the mind into gods, they actually arrested the process of religious development. Most mythologies remained frozen in the struggle between the two first potencies, as if engaged in an unending fight between divinities.

In that respect, Mazdaism, the noble religion of ancient Persia, constitutes an exception. Schelling judged it to approach monotheism, as

he understood the term. Unfortunately, being almost entirely reduced to Greek sources written well after the founding time of the movement and long before the substantial changes it underwent in the Sassanian kingdom, he knew little of the origins of Mazdaism. We now know, or think we know, that Zarathustra, an Iranian sage who lived some nine hundred years before the present era, in his poems and sermons converted an old Indo-Iranian collection of beliefs and rituals into a simple, highly moral religion. His doctrine has often been interpreted as a dualism in which two ultimate principles, Ormuzd the good and Ahriman the evil one, were locked in a permanent struggle. In fact, evil was to be permanently overcome by the one principle of good. Despite his inadequate sources, Schelling perceived the monotheistic nature of Zarathustra's thought.

After the prophet's death, Mazdaism began to slide toward a common polytheistic religion. At some point, the supreme god, Ahura-Mazda (the wise Lord), was believed to have had a female consort, Anahita. Considering the original purity of the Mazda faith, Schelling surmises that she may have entered the Persian religion under the influence of nearby Assyrian-Babylonian female cults. In the Hellenistic age, when Mazdaism began to be called Zoroastrism (after the Greek name of its prophet), the young god Mithra, not named in the original sources but mentioned in the Indian Rg-Veda hymns, came to play a central role in Iranian mythology. His mediating function may be compared to that of Osiris and Dionysus. A god of light, usually represented with the sun, he was believed to have overcome the opposition between Ormuzd's kingdom of light and Ahriman's reign of darkness. Eventually he appears to have merged with Ahura-Mazda himself and, as all-inclusive Absolute, to have contained both light and darkness.

As the cult spread during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, a luxuriant pantheon grew around the figure of Mithra. But the core of the myth, the young god who passes (the *transitus*) through great pain and dangers to capture and kill the wild bull, remained remarkably stable. Some scholars have interpreted this bull as the primeval animal, from whose body sprang plants, grains, and animals to serve human needs. Others identify the bull with the zodiac figure Taurus that is visible during the dark period of the year and in the spring must yield to the new light. In either case, Mithra appears as a humble god who labors in the service of humans and, after his full divinization, incorporates the qualities of all gods within himself. Even in this later mythical form Mazdaism differs from other mythologies in that it bypasses the struggle between the older and the younger gods. Mithra does not fight Ahura-

Mazda; he incorporates him. Not without reason does Schelling regard Mazdaism as having prepared the religions of the future.

The coming of Dionysus and his Phoenician, Egyptian, and Persian counterparts introduces the third potency, which reconciles the first and the second. The struggle between the two former principles has ended in a defeat of the dominant principle (in Greek mythology represented by Kronos). The dominant god—whether Kronos or Cybele—being exclusive of all others, lacked the complexity of a spiritual religion. With the advent of the mediating gods, the celestial kingdom acquired a spiritual, that is, a complex, inclusive quality. The new gods still remain “material” substances, but they differ from the old ones in that they directly prepare a different interpretation of the mythological process. In them the three potencies remain active at each of the three moments. The struggle against the dominant principle here ends in a final reconciliation (13:396–401).

Three religions completed, each in a different way, the cycle of the potencies: the Egyptian, the Indian, and the Greek. They directly prepared a spiritual monotheism. The Egyptian strongly emphasized the struggle between the old and the new gods. Here also Herodotus served as Schelling's principal source of information, though Plutarch's treatise on Isis and Osiris assisted him in perceiving some of the meaning of the historian's confused narrative. Typhon, comparable to the Kronos of the Greeks, was originally the god of the desert, who with burning winds dried up the fertile land. The benevolent Osiris restores fertility by inundating it with the Nile. Typhon kills the young god and disperses the members of his body. Isis, Osiris's sister (or bride), collects and reassembles them. Brought back to life, Osiris defeats Typhon and, according to one version of the myth, kills him, while Isis, who here appears as Typhon's spouse, laments his death. In another version, Osiris, now Isis's spouse and brother of Typhon, commits adultery with Typhon's wife Nephtys. Isis's changing role in these different versions illustrates the ambivalence created by the young god's coming: people prefer him but still fear the old god. In the end the myth takes a significant turn: Typhon merges with his young antagonist Osiris and in this reconciliation the myth reaches what Schelling considers to be the third potency.

In the Egyptian myth the gods begin to lose their fixed, substantial identity and to present the impersonal powers of the religious consciousness. When Typhon merges with Osiris, he reveals that he was not the aboriginal oppressive, undifferentiated substance, but merely a potency of Being confronting another potency and bound to unite with it in a third one. Osiris also gives up his substantial identity in order

to become a symbol of spiritual unity. At this final stage, the god, as well as the one with whom he merges, becomes truly the *one who must be* (*der sein sollende*). The most significant episode in the story is the dispersion of Osiris's limbs. It symbolizes the plurality that must enter into the true (i.e., all-inclusive) idea of God. It also suggests that to fulfill their ideal function the gods must lay down their earthly lives. Typhon and Osiris, it now appears, were no more than opposite facets of the same reality. The tension among the mythical characters was merely a means to restore the divine unity. "The goal is the reparation of the original unity, of the monotheism that was given with the essence of man and that had to be raised to a higher level [*aufgehoben*] in order to be recognized not as a potential or material [monotheism], but as an actual unity of God and consciousness" (12:374).

The Osiris myth seemed headed for a spiritual idea of God. Yet at the end Egyptian mythology returns to its earlier, material representations, even though the thinking that had motivated the story had already moved well beyond them. Precisely where the myth seems to attain its spiritual conclusion, it exposes its permanent inadequacy. Instead of opening up into a vision of the one God who contains all things within Himself, the myth once again descends into a coarsely material representation of the multiplicity of beings immanent in God. After the concept was ready to assert the spiritual nature of God, the material principle intervenes and breaks up the spiritual unity. The unity dissolves in an abundance of animals and half-animals. With these animal gods the myth regresses to an earlier stage when the gods, afraid of Typhon, hid themselves in animal bodies. But the appearance of dogs, ibises, and hawks seems singularly inappropriate after the completion of the Osiris myth.

The fact that Egyptian religion retained its mythical form allowed it to celebrate the yearly recessions and expansions of the Nile. Myths develop in time, but they never attain a historical ending. The events never cease to repeat themselves. Even the old gods, suppressed from the present, never fully disappear. They still enjoy a modest veneration and remain objects of a vague fear. Next to the large temples dedicated to Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, who incarnates the third potency and the end of the mythical struggle, small ones were erected for Typhon. Egypt never abandoned its mythology, but constantly corrected it.

Schelling saw one such correction in the existence of *agennètoi* (un-born), premythical or "metaphysical" gods who, though presented in human forms, are products of thought rather than of the mythical imagination. Among them was Amun, "the Zeus of Thebe" (as Herod-

otus calls him), adored in the huge temple of Karnak. Schelling ranks them with the "Sabist" cults of the beginning. But their cult continuing until the Christian era rather seems to indicate that Egyptian religion resists being compressed within his rigorous mythical interpretation.

Schelling regards Vedic mythology also as "complete." Its gods represent all three potencies. Yet, according to the *Philosophy of Mythology*, they remain independent of each other and thereby fail to resolve the tensions that divide them. Brahma, the passionate, rash, and blind god (12:448), whom Schelling compares to Typhon, has been completely relegated to the past. Virtually no temples are dedicated to him, and he receives little cultic attention. Shiva, the destroyer who replaces him, never became more than a destructive principle. The religious mind, dissatisfied with these negative deities, simply moved on to a third, spiritual godhead, Vishnu, the god of Being (*Sattwa*) and of light, who incarnates the third potency but has little to do with the other two gods of the supreme triad.

In Schelling's presentation, Indian mythology developed in a direction opposite to the Egyptian and the Greek. Both continued to maintain a cult for the god of the beginning, while Indian religion, abandoning the original principle altogether, shifted without transition to a spiritual principle. It thereby lost the foundational principle, the ground of the entire process (13:403). The abrupt move to a spiritual unity may have satisfied a spiritual elite, but not the ordinary believer. Indian mythology could not have survived in such a thin spiritual atmosphere, and people reverted to more material gods.

Schelling's purely mythological and overly simplistic treatment of Hinduism fails to account for much in Indian religion that was barely connected with the three gods. Nor does the alleged independence of the three principal gods explain the unique status of Hinduism. In fact, by Schelling's own account, a very real relation does exist between Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu. The balanced, differentiated power of Vishnu could not exist without Shiva's destruction of Brahma's autocratic "monism." A text quoted from the Puranas (mostly written between the first and the tenth century AD) describes their intimate relatedness: "As light shows a difference, greater or less, according to its nearness or distance from fire, so is there a variation in the energy of Brahman [the Absolute, distinct from Brahma, the supreme god]. Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva are his chief energies. . . . Vishnu is the highest and most immediate of all the energies of Brahman. On him this entire universe is woven and interwoven: from him is the world and the world is in him; and he is the whole universe" (Vishnu, 1:22).

Let us assume, however, that the link between Vishnu and the other

two gods is too weak to support Vishnu's spiritual piety. Does that explain why he becomes fragmented into an infinite number of avatars, as Schelling maintains? In the Puranas Vishnu appears in the guise of the young shepherd Rama, center of numerous epic compositions, or of Krishna, the god of the Mahabharata's war and of the epiphany of the Bhagavad Gita. The theory of the potencies provides little assistance for understanding this fragmentation. As for the Vedanta, the mystical completion of the Veda, it is not so much an interpretation of Indian mythology as an attempt to free the religious mind of myth altogether.

An even more forceful rejection of mythology appears in Buddhism. The early, practical Theravada as well as the later, more metaphysical Mahayana abstained from any kind of theogony, as Schelling duly notes. Was Buddhism a twig of the mythically sober Iranian religion to which it, particularly in South India, appears close, or did it originate in the ascetic and/or mystical trends of the Vedanta? In either case it remains far from the structural principles of the *Philosophy of Mythology*, although not more so than Chinese "religion," which, by Schelling's own admission, possesses neither autochthonous myths nor gods! Rather than attempting an artificial explanation to save his elusive schema, the author proposes an ingenious hypothesis to account for this absence.

Myth, he had often asserted, requires the conscious identity of a people. But the inhabitants of the gigantic Chinese Empire never regarded themselves as "a" people, but rather as humanity itself. Their enormous territory and superior institutions presented no occasion for comparing themselves with others. Schelling maintains that only with the beginning of a national consciousness do people abandon the primitive state that precedes mythology. This requires that they reject the exclusive dominance of the all-encompassing sacred. China followed a different direction: its people never developed a theogonic rebellion. Instead they transferred their traditional religious expressions of respect and submission to the Empire. Not even the idea of heaven, so prominent in Chinese culture, refers to a transcendent power: it constituted an integral part of the social universe. Their *religio astralis in rem publicam* (12:531) allowed the emperor to rule by the heavenly motions. This civil religion, in which the secular became sacred, prevented Chinese culture from passing through a theogonic process to reach self-consciousness.

Finally, Schelling turns to Greek mythology, the one that had provided the model for his theory since the early *Philosophy of Art*. He regards it as the most spiritual because it immediately prepares the transition to the "true" idea of God. He notes that Greek mythology, more than any other, displays a certain rationality. Hesiod's history of

the gods raised theogony into an intelligible system. A concern for rationality appears also in Herodotus, who claimed that the Greeks first gave names to the gods. Yet the religious reason never became abstract. At every stage, the Greeks recurred to images and often earthy representations for expressing an ideal content. This balance between material form and spiritual significance gave Greek myths a natural aptitude for being turned into poetry. Indeed, they formed the original content of Greek poetry.

The story of the gods starts with Chaos, an ideal concept as well as a physical one. From Chaos Hesiod moves directly to Gaia (the Earth), the first female principle and the source of the mythical process. She bears Uranos, but also the mountains, the sea, and the Titans, among them Kronos and Rhea, his future wife. In a second generation, Gaia bears the Cyclops, whom Zeus later used in his battle against the Titans. These primitive creatures populated the earth before it became civilized. The Greeks despised them yet never forgot them. They moved them to the past, but that past remained vitally linked to the present and even to the future. Thus Kronos, the horrible ancestor, was still needed to understand Dionysus, the latest of the gods.

In Schelling's view, the many gods owed their origin to the disintegration of the one homogeneous reality principle. As Kronos, who presented that principle, started losing his power, it broke down into a number of increasingly more spiritual principles, which together formed a harmonious universe. "Greek mythology consists in the soft death, the true euthanasia of the real principle which, after its departure and demise, still leaves a beautiful, fascinating world of appearances in its place" (13:405). The ambiguous figure of Demeter therein occupies a central position. She stands between the real world of the past, dominated by the oppressive power of Kronos, and the ideal world of the future (12:631). Still, the memory of the simple life of the age of Kronos (in Latin, Saturnus) continued to evoke nostalgia in the Greek mind. It was remembered as the golden age, a time when no border stones divided the fields and when the earth was recognized to be a common possession.

Surprisingly, it was Demeter, the remembrance of the past, who introduced people to agriculture, the beginning of higher civilization. Indeed, this is how she was commonly remembered. Yet she was much more than a seasonal goddess. The Greek mysteries revolved around her. Obviously, agriculture requires no foundation in mysteries. Nor was her daughter Persephone, abducted to the underworld, a mere image of the seed buried in the ground to reemerge after six months

as a living plant. While distressedly seeking her daughter, Demeter is, in Schelling's view, looking for the lost god of the beginnings.

The Eleusinian mysteries enact the goddess's erring search, her resignation, and, at last, the advent of her son Dionysus. This god of the future concluded the mythical cycle, even though at an earlier stage Dionysus had very much been part of the polytheistic struggle. He even had been killed. Yet he had risen to new life and in the end was to survive all gods. His mother, Demeter, symbolized the transition from the dominion of the old god, the one who should not be (*der nicht sein sollte*), to the higher potency of the new god who ought to be (*der sein sollte*) (12:634).

Persephone plays hereby a significant role. "The myths relating to Persephone contain the key to the entire mythology—a key provided by mythology itself. . . . The origins of mythology present in the Persephone doctrine move into the innermost depths of human existence" (12:181). She represents the dangerous odyssey of freedom as it begins to assert itself—with tragic consequences and eventual compromises. Her life begins in a state of innocence, yet she is vaguely aware of her ability to move out of this primeval state. As she tests her freedom by wandering off on her own, the god of the underworld abducts her to his kingdom of darkness. In response to the pleas of her mother, Hades allows her to spend half a year above ground and half a year with him in the underworld. Beyond the obvious seasonal reference of the myth lies a profound awareness of the destiny of freedom, which moves from innocence to fall to rebirth. Consciousness has to die to its natural life in order to attain spiritual awareness.

Yet a third god plays a major part in the Eleusinian mysteries: Dionysus. In Greek mythology he appears in three different impersonations. First as the chthonian Zagreus, the wild son of Zeus and Persephone, still very much a figure of the rustic, primitive age. The second Dionysus, the so-called Theban Bacchus, son of Zeus and the nymph Semele, incarnates the joy and revelry that accompanies the liberation from the old god. In his murder (similar to Osiris's) by raging maenads who tore the limbs off his body, Schelling sees a symbol of the fragmentation into many gods. It is, however, the third Dionysus, Iakchos, the son of Zeus and Demeter, who stands central in the mysteries (see 13:465–83). Iakchos assumes some features of the first and the second Dionysus. The hierophant still referred to him as Zagreus, and the suffering and death of Bacchus played a considerable part in the holy ritual. Yet, as we shall see, his significance lies elsewhere. He is the god of the future.

The mysteries form the transition from mythology to revealed reli-

gion: in them the esoteric meaning of the myth becomes revealed. Demeter, reconciled to her fate, the loss of Persephone and of the old god, resolves the existential tensions represented by the struggling gods. The dramatic presentation of the mysteries forced the participants to confront the initial terror that lay hidden in the mythical narratives. Yet in the end the initiation promised lasting beatitude after death. The reliving of Persephone's descent to Hades concluded in an encounter with the god of life. "Hades and Dionysus are one," Plutarch had cryptically written. While reenacting the mythical events, the mysteries liberated the initiates from the endless continuance and oppressive materiality of the mythical process.

The initiation into the mysteries has often been compared with an introduction to philosophy. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato likens the goal of philosophy to that of the mysteries, namely, to move from the material to a spiritual realm where death has no more power over life. Still the mysteries contain no philosophy. They have more in common with the Greek tragedy, which was believed to have originated in songs that commemorated the suffering and death of Dionysus. The classical drama still began with a sacrifice to the god of the mysteries. All that evoked pity and fear in the tragedy, human fate with its unpredictiveness and inevitable end, the initiates intensely experienced while participating in the trials of the suffering god.

Why were the mysteries secret? The stories of Demeter and Dionysus were universally known. Their images appeared everywhere, poets had sung their adventures, and playwrights had presented them on the stage. So, how could what was publicly known be kept secret? Schelling linked the "secret" to Dionysus's third impersonation. Iakchos, the third Dionysus, popularly depicted as a child at Demeter's breast, was called "the god who comes," the god of the future. That future had to remain secret, for the promise it held of the god who was to bring the theogonic process to an end threatened not only the national gods but also the state itself, which rested on them. The mystery was revealed only to the initiates. Even the gods should not hear about it. It was to be "shown," not told. Whoever betrayed it risked capital punishment. Even Aeschylus, the great dramatist, narrowly escaped death because he allegedly had revealed the secret of the mystery when, through the mouth of Prometheus, in the play that bore his name, he had predicted that Zeus would lose his throne.

Such was Schelling's interpretation of the still unsolved problem of the secrecy of the mysteries. Today it impresses us as highly speculative and probably incorrect. The mysteries almost certainly contained no prophecy of future monotheism. At most they may have suggested that

Dionysus, the god of the future, would bring the ruling divine hierarchy to an end. Schelling was undoubtedly right, however, about the consolation the mysteries brought to the deep-seated melancholy that, despite an exuberant vitality, possessed the Hellenic mind. Even in its most confident creativity—indeed, there particularly—one senses a sad awareness of the irredeemable finitude of existence. The mysteries promised a better life after death.

Schelling's exclusively religious interpretation of the myth has found scarce approval among contemporary scholars. Indeed, for some, such as Claude Lévi-Strauss, religion has hardly anything to do with myth: it consists in symbolic models of social structures employed by the "savage mind" to justify the existing ones or to promote alternative ones. Levi-Strauss's theory has introduced new elements, but it has left out the religious significance of myths, which most scholars (particularly Mircea Eliade) continue to recognize in one way or another. Whether or not the primary significance of the myth is religious does not affect Schelling's thesis, that it constitutes a necessary stage in the mind's development toward transcendence. It prepares the idea of a God who, rather than excluding finite beings, includes them within Himself. Schelling's decision to build a general theory of myth on the limited basis of Near Eastern and Greek mythologies, while omitting Oceanian, Germanic, and Slavic ones, is indefensible. Yet what has been most seriously attacked from the beginning is the philosophical scheme, insufficiently supported by empirical evidence, within which he has compelled all myths. He thereby weakened the success of his intended project, namely, to explore the "internal logic" of the myth.

In his *Philosophy of Revelation* Schelling attempted to show that Christianity, the only revelation he considered, was the ultimate goal of mythology and the fulfillment of promises implicit in the mysteries. In that profound but controversial work, he applied the theory of the potencies to Christian monotheism and, once again, gave that theory a different, trinitarian interpretation. The history of polytheistic religion is no more than an episode in God's intratrinitarian drama. It constitutes the first act of the Son's attempt to return humanity to its divine destination. Before appearing in visible form the Son directs humanity in its mythical search for a spiritual monotheism. The potencies, which in various mythologies stood in opposition to one another, thereby gradually move toward integration and unity. God does not interfere with this essentially natural process, but acts as its natural moving power. To the ancient Christian claim that the Old Testament prepared Israel for the appearance of the Messiah, Schelling adds the one that pagan mythology induced the nations to wait for "the god who comes."

In most mythologies he detects a longing for liberation from a blind, oppressive power. What paganism interpreted as the crushing power of an ancient god he compares to Luther's wrath of God and to Boehme's Unwill.

To some Romantics, Christianity itself appeared to be no more than a continuation of the myth of the liberating god and Christ a new impersonation of Dionysus. But according to Schelling, one fundamental difference separates the Christian revelation from the myth: whereas myth is entirely a product of the creative imagination, revelation rests on a historical basis (14:229-33). Sagas and legends may have embellished its historical core. But they could do so only because the history possessed an extraordinary significance. Schelling does not define the extent to which legend and mythology could infiltrate the sources of revelation without jeopardizing the message itself. He admits the presence of mythical elements in the Old Testament. The prophets fought an unceasing battle against the influence of the myths of the Near East. But he draws a sharp line between the Christian Gospel and the continuing presence of myth in the Hellenistic culture. His unqualified defense of the historical truth of Christianity made his theory vulnerable to the attacks of David Friedrich Strauss, Bruno Bauer, and Rudolf Bultmann.

Contemporary philosophers have objected to Schelling's method. Thus Walter Schulz, in a classic study,⁴ claims that Schelling's "positive" philosophy remained essentially idealist and as "negative" as Fichte's and Hegel's. What Schelling ascribes to divine revelation has in fact been predetermined by the philosophical structure of his own theory. The allegedly real God of revelation still remains the God of philosophy. Schelling would probably reply that positive philosophy is indeed philosophy, but philosophy mediated by faith. Viewed from that perspective, his "positive philosophy" might not be essentially different from Anselm's *fides quaerens intellectum*. Still, it would be hard to deny that the theory of potencies, which Schelling imposes upon revelation, basically determines the nature of its content. What at the beginning still appears to be a method for understanding the content of mythology and revelation soon turns into the content itself. Symptomatic of this domination by philosophy is that Schelling unreservedly equates the Christian idea of reconciliation with the philosophical category of mediation.

Our final judgment on the *Philosophy of Mythology*, then, must remain

⁴ Walter Schulz, *Die Vollendung des deutschen Idealismus in der Spätphilosophie Schellings* (Pfulding: Neske, 1975).

a conditional one. To the extent that Schelling's theory assumed a genuinely receptive attitude with respect to myth and revelation, rather than predetermining it by philosophical categories, we may regard it as legitimate. But the traditional name of such an enterprise has been theology, not philosophy. To the extent that philosophy a priori defines the limits of mythology and revelation—as it definitely did in the theory of the potencies—it was indeed philosophy, but not *positive* philosophy.

Imitatio Creatoris: The Hermeneutical Primordality of Creativity in Moral Life

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This article uses postmodern hermeneutical resources to argue that moral life involves a radical and primordial capability for creativity. There would be nothing new in saying that morality *makes use of* creativity: ethical principles require imaginative application to particular situations, moral sentiments need creative expression, literature can help clarify ethical understanding, moral traditions must undergo constant transformation over time, the “other” calls for the self’s endless moral deconstruction, and oppressed groups demand new structures of society. What I want to suggest here, however—on the level of metaethics, or the *kind* of activity that is moral (as opposed to what may actually be right or wrong to do)—is that creative making, fashioning, and transforming lie at the very core of human moral practice. That is, moral practice is creative not just incidentally but inherently.

This view joins increasing efforts to move beyond the usual metaethical debates about modernist universalism versus premodernist particularism, that is, situating moral practice either beyond or within historical traditions. More profoundly, it also challenges a claim that unites a great deal of premodern and modern Western moral thought from Plato to Aristotle, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, and even Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche. That claim is that “ethics” must be fundamentally distinguished from “poetics,” the former being public, rational, and fixed over against the latter as private, subjective, and dealing with changeable appearances. This ingrained distinction, now more or less assumed, is both flawed and dangerous. In the following, I challenge it in a fundamental and even primordial way through a hermeneutical rereading of the Genesis 1 mythology of humankind as an “image of God.” I propose that this text, particularly in Christianity, has served as a lens for separating ethics and poetics, while in fact it may be read, instead, to suggest quite

the opposite: that moral life involves a capability for the *imitatio Creatoris*, that is, humanity's deeper self-humanization by imitating the divine act of Creation in the ongoing creation of our own finite moral worlds.

THE PLATONIC LEGACY

Why do we tend to assume today that, while virtually all other areas of human endeavor involve some kind of dynamic and open-ended creation of the given into the new—from the arts to science, technology, and culture—moral life somehow stands apart as either applying or retrieving some order of fixed and unchanging good? The answer to this question has to do in part with the slippery nature of moral relations themselves, involving by necessity multiple and even incommensurable interests, perspectives, and goods. But it also contains deep theoretical roots in an ancient Greek quarrel of the philosophers and the poets, which in turn left its mark very early in Christianity and was incorporated in different ways into premodernity, modernity, and even postmodernity.

Plato did not start this ancient quarrel, but he did draw its lines especially sharply and influentially. At least a seventh of his *Republic* addresses why the poets—such as Homer, Hesiod, Aeschylus, and Sophocles—not only fail to articulate the essential “idea” (*eidos*) of goodness and justice but, as poets, distort it.¹ It is not the philosophers who corrupt the youth (as Plato's teacher Socrates had been executed for) but the “makers” of pleasant and beguiling images and stories. According to Plato, “The imitative poet produces a bad regime in the soul of each private man by making phantasms that are very far from the truth and by gratifying the soul's foolish part.”² Why? Because the activity of poetics (*poiêsis*) is by definition the “imitation” (*mimêsis*) of truth, making it able to grasp only the world's changing visible appearances and not its eternal invisible depths. “The imitator, we say, understands nothing of what *is* but rather of what looks like it *is*.”³ The very establishment of philosophy as the pursuit of truth and goodness, in fact, depends to a significant degree for Plato on overturning the mere poetic “making” of “images” (*eikones*) of truth and beginning to uncover truth as it actually “is,” Truth as invisible and unchanging Being.

While Aristotle is more moderate in this regard than his teacher,

¹ Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic, 1968), 377b–403c, 595a–608b.

² *Ibid.*, 605b.

³ *Ibid.*, 601c.

Plato, he continues to separate ethics and poetics unequivocally. In book 6 of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle insists that “production [*poiêsis*] has an end other than itself, but [moral] action does not: good action [action involving *phronêsis* or practical wisdom] is itself an end.”⁴ That is, poetics (broadly understood) is the activity of producing something beyond the poetic act itself: a poem, a play, a chair, a building. Phronesis or moral wisdom, in contrast, is the activity of acting well as such: being courageous, acting beneficently, practicing justice, and so on. Aristotle’s definition of the good life as “activity in accordance with virtue” hangs significantly on this distinction. Virtue (*aretê*) is not fundamentally the production of anything new, of “external goods” in the world, but the excellence or perfection of “internal goods,” goods already constituting the true aims of being human. It is possible, on Aristotle’s view, for a poet to “imitate” good actions—hence he is kinder to them than Plato—but good action itself is not poetically produced; it realizes an already natural and habituated orientation to right ends.⁵

Such distinctions have had an enormous influence through the ages over Christianity. Augustine’s *Confessions*, for example, continually signifies wayward human existence through the trope of his early life as a teacher of “rhetoric,” since here, “through clouds of smoke,” he and his companions used the art of poetics to become “deceivers and deceived in all our different aims and ambitions.”⁶ Poetic cleverness is contrasted with his later life after conversion when he is finally and eternally anchored by God’s unchanging moral righteousness, a place beyond mere worldly appearances that brings him to an invisible peace and rest. Augustine exhibits a deep, and to us today rather surprising, antipathy toward the theater, which he accuses of teaching audiences to find pleasure in imaginary pain instead of painfully confessing the awful truth of their sinfulness; only in this way is one opened up to the true enjoyment of God.⁷ He likewise undertakes virulent criticisms in *The City of God* of the made “images” worshipped in Roman idolatry, which he opposes to the Christian worship of the one true invisible Maker beyond any possible human imitation.⁸

By the time of Thomas’s *Summa Theologica*, the distinction of poetics

⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Martin Ostwald (New York: Macmillan, 1962), bk. 6, 1140b, lines 5–6.

⁵ Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Ingram Bywater, in *Introduction to Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, 2nd ed., rev. and enlarged (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), 661–713.

⁶ Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (New York: Penguin, 1961), bk. 6, chaps. 1–2.

⁷ Ibid., bk. 3, chap. 2.

⁸ Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin, 1984), bk. 2, chaps. 7, 25, 27; bk. 4, chap. 32; bk. 8, chap. 23; and bk. 19, chap. 23.

from ethics is fully taken for granted. In the brief sections he devotes to it, Thomas directly and explicitly follows Aristotle to argue that “art is the ‘right reason of things to be made’; whereas prudence [that is, phronesis] is the ‘right reason of things to be done.’ . . . Now ‘making’ and ‘doing’ differ . . . in that ‘making’ is an action passing into outward matter, e.g. ‘to build,’ ‘to saw,’ and so forth; whereas ‘doing’ is an action abiding in the agent, e.g. ‘to see,’ ‘to will,’ and the like.”⁹ Again, since moral virtue is judged according to its internal habit or end, it is of an entirely different nature than art or creativity, whose goodness or worth is defined principally by the external form of its product.

One can find this distinction of ethics from poetics also ingrained within the otherwise very different world of modernity. Immanuel Kant, to take the example of the most influential ethicist of the Enlightenment, separates the two (respectively) in his second and third critiques, arguing that morality realizes human freedom in its imperative, autonomous, and lawlike sense, as opposed to what is now called “aesthetics,” which realizes freedom in its subjective, heteronomous, and expressive sense. Poetics as “aesthetics” comes to mean something considered more humane and refined than Greek making, craft, or imitating: namely, the perception or reproduction of the beauty and sublimity of art or nature. Aesthetic judgment does, for Kant, claim a kind of universal assent (to say a flower or a painting is beautiful is to say others should find it beautiful too). Yet it is universal only in the subjective sense that it claims to exhibit “good taste.” As Kant says, “I cannot be talked into it [good taste] by means of any proofs.”¹⁰ Ethics, by contrast, is universal in the different, objective sense that it demands proof. The ethics of the “categorical imperative” requires precisely that one should not act according to subjective preferences but rather by what is necessarily obligatory, the unchanging “moral law.”¹¹

The depths of the distinction of ethics from poetics here can be seen by its assumption even by modernity’s critics. Nietzsche’s transvaluation of values, for example, claims to move finally “beyond good and evil”—beyond ethics as rationalized ahistorical law—to a vision of human life

⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger, 1947), pt. I-II, Q. 57, a. 4.

¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. P. Guyer and E. Matthews (1790; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 166.

¹¹ Interestingly, however, the Kant scholar David Guyer has argued that an “ulterior motive” of Kant’s third critique may have been to “make our practical [moral] freedom palpable to us” in the actual “experience of freedom,” given how abstract it remains in the second critique (*Kant and the Experience of Freedom: Essays on Aesthetics and Morality* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993], 3 and 335). This does not alter the fact, though, that ethics and aesthetics remain in Kant inherently distinct.

characterized in part by pure making and invention.¹² Radical though this is, it still rests on the contrast of morality and aesthetics, however much it inverts their priority. Nietzsche's "superman" throws off the shackles of the Kantian moral law only, in fact, to embrace a rather Kantian aesthetic freedom of taste (combined, it is true, with a Greek poetics of self-making) as the more authentic human activity. Our most sublime actions should be motivated by the beauty and power of the inner human spirit as opposed to the mere mass thinking of morality. As a result, Nietzsche's will to power and revenge against resentment do not overturn but in fact necessarily presuppose the ancient quarrel between the moralists and the poets—the difference being only that he chooses the latter over the former. In a way, it is Plato's own banishment of the poets from the city that is to blame for their Nietzschean eternal return: now cloaked in the Trojan Horse of aesthetic nihilism or self-making authenticity.

The major result of these long-standing historical distinctions for moral thought today is a profound and widespread metaethical assumption, powerful but rarely articulated, that poetic activity may perhaps be *useful* for moral life (or not) but moral life is precisely *not itself* a poetic kind of activity. Even with postmodernist ethical sensibilities toward multiculturalism, historicism, and particularism, ethicists and ordinary persons still generally imagine that ethics is not fundamentally a meaning-making activity in the same way as are the arts and sciences. As I have argued elsewhere, the recent recovery of Aristotelianism into narrative and tradition-constituted moral theory still preserves much of Aristotle's poetics-ethics distinction: by assuming that while traditions may be creatively formed over time, this occurs only in the service of a presumed hidden and unchanging moral core and in the service of a historically fixed common good.¹³

Whether one believes that moral practice rests on universal or on historical grounds, moral norms are not thought to be "made" by us. Moral life does not involve a struggle to produce anything fundamentally new. Rather, we are conditioned to seek out steady ethical harbors: determined rules or moral laws, incontrovertible principles, historically established virtues, traditional or cultural coherencies, just equations of power, even hospitality for the ineffable other. Rules, virtues, power, and responsibility may change, and they may even change in response to narratives and literature, but they change only in order better to

¹² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (1886; New York: Vintage, 1966).

¹³ John Wall, "Phronesis as Poetic: Moral Creativity in Contemporary Aristotelianism," *Review of Metaphysics* 59, no. 2 (December 2005): 313–31.

approximate some unchanging or lost moral core. If most of us can no longer believe in a Platonic metaphysical Good, we still largely accept Plato's underlying suspicion of moral creativity and inventiveness. Indeed, the great horrors of the twentieth century—from its unprecedentedly violent social experiments to its vast new capabilities for technological and environmental destruction—would seem to make human creativity even more ethically problematic in the contemporary world than ever before.

IN THE IMAGE OF CREATION

If there is a creative dimension of moral activity, it must be sought, not just in creative products like narratives and literature, but more fundamentally or primordially on the level of human capabilities. Our question is not what actual goods human creative capabilities may create, but what it means for moral life to involve a creative capability. Rather than begin with theories of art, technology, or science, I want to begin instead with moral practice itself in order to peel back some of its own possible poetic presuppositions. If I do so through poetic texts like myths and symbols, this is only because these may more clearly reveal underlying human moral poetic capabilities.

Let us examine, in this light, the ancient biblical mythology of humankind as created “in the image” of its Creator. As claimed in Gen. 1:27, “God created humankind in his image [*tselem*], in the image [*tselem*] of God he created them; male and female he created them.”¹⁴ This symbolism has variously been interpreted in Judaism, Christianity, and modernity to suggest human capabilities for such things as rationality, knowledge of God, dominance over other creatures, assistance to God, rest, reflexivity, and self-transcendence.¹⁵ Less often, however, is it juxtaposed with the line that immediately follows, a line that gives God's very first biblical command to humanity: “God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth’” (Gen. 1:28).

Leaving aside debates about the ambiguous Hebrew meanings of “subdue” and “have dominion,” this first command to be fruitful and multiply is arguably in part the text's own interpretation of what it means for human beings to act uniquely as images of their Creator.

¹⁴ I use the New Revised Standard Version throughout.

¹⁵ For the variety of meanings of this term in Christianity, see Claus Westermann, *Genesis* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1980), 204–5.

God himself appears in Genesis 1 not as Judge, Prime Mover, pure Intellect, or even yet Redeemer. God appears, in the very first place, as the Creator of the world who has just herself been fruitful and multiplied. God has just created night and day, land and waters, plants and animals, and the whole plurality and diversity of the Creation as we know it. This includes, finally, God's "multiplication" of God's own self in God's image in humankind. In the image of this Creator, human beings may be commanded, albeit in their own limited and ultimately fallen ways, to share also in the fruitful creation of their world.

The term "*tselem*" or "image," which occurs hardly anywhere else in the Bible, will shortly be used again, in fact, in Gen. 5:3, where Seth is said to be an "image" of his father, Adam. Somehow *adam*—in the sense of "humankind" generally—is originally an image of God in a similar way that a child may be said to be an image of its parent. (I return later to issues of gender.) Human beings are primordially—that is, mythically, originally, and prior to their fall—affirmed to have been created by God. But what this actually means, in part, is that they are also, even after the fall, affirmed to have been created in such a way as to be likewise capable of going on to create analogously for themselves. A similar double meaning can be found in the Latin *imago Dei*, where "*imago*" can suggest not only reproduction, copy, or shadow—as in the more obvious and static interpretation of Gen. 1:27—but also a more dynamic imitation, similitude, or likeness.

What is primordially—indeed mysteriously—characteristic of human beings, this myth could be read to suggest, is their capability, in some likeness to their Creator, for the creation of their own relational, social, historical, and moral worlds. The command to "be fruitful and multiply" points, ethically, not just to domination over the world but more fundamentally to a responsibility as imitators of the world's Maker to make this world a better place, to produce something more and better within it. In this case, one could say with Philip Hefner that humanity is a "created co-creator" with God, a "free creator of meanings . . . who takes action based on those meanings."¹⁶ However, from a moral and not only scientific or cultural point of view, we can add that the command affirms the fundamental goodness of humanity's capability for co-creating its own societies and relations.

This Creation symbolism also offers, no doubt against the self-consciousness of its actual authors, a symbolism for symbolism itself, an "image" for humanity's strange but apparently original capability for

¹⁶ Philip Hefner, *The Human Factor: Evolution, Culture, and Meaning* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 239.

making its own “images” of its world. The myth is on some level, however much one may think it inspired by God, itself also a human creation. No animals or plants have myths of their origins. None of them appear to be quite the same kind of creative, originating creatures or to be moved to ponder in quite the same way their relation to the world’s original Creation. Genesis 1 is in part, from this angle, a story about the divine-human activity of “creating” that the story itself (whether consciously or not) also imitates or images. It provides this capability a concrete interpretation and meaning. In Judith Butler’s sense, the story “performs” its own telling, exhibiting the human activity that it also depicts.¹⁷

Perhaps the story’s strangest suggestion of all, in fact, is that the Creator creates not just a world but also an “image” of itself within that world, namely us. The myth is on some level a dark liminal mirror—an imitation, if you will—of our own deepest capability for creating images of the meaning of our own humanity. As in Michelangelo’s painting *The Creation of Adam*, humanity and God are in a sense affirmed as mirror images of one another, reaching out in creative tension to touch each other’s outstretched fingers. The myth points to an ultimately mysterious human capability for making such things as myths in the first place—something no actual human creation could ever quite capture since it would always already be presupposed.

Such a reading of Gen. 1:27 offers a countersymbolism to one of the chief ways in which the Bible has historically been used precisely to separate ethics from poetics: namely, through the opposition in the prophets and writings and beyond between being good and making “graven” images. These prohibitions need not necessarily be read as moral imperatives against human creativity as such. They may, rather, in light of Genesis 1, offer a warning against an otherwise originally good human creative capability’s moral and ritual corruption. The *objects* we make to be likenesses of God (including, finally, even Genesis 1 itself) must inevitably fall short of our own likeness to the Creator as *subjects* commanded to be fruitful and multiply in God’s image. Indeed (in a way that, as we will see, connects this myth to postmodern phenomenology), the very opposition of created “objects” and creative “subjects” itself implies a perverse dominion over our surrounding world that contradicts humankind’s more original possibility (as “being-in-the-world”) for harmonious fruitfulness within it. The covenants at Sinai and elsewhere are, after all, themselves efforts, in the face of humanity’s incessant self-

¹⁷ Judith Butler, *Antigone’s Claim: Kinship between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

defeat, at creating a new and better human society—and precisely through human beings relating to one another more fully in, rather than apart from, their Creator.

RECONSIDERING IMITATION

This creative possibility can be rendered somewhat more concrete by considering an alternative and largely forgotten Jewish and Christian tradition of interpretation of the Genesis myth. This chiefly ancient and medieval tradition reads the *imago Dei* as not just something passively received but also a responsibility and a command, precisely, to imitate the Creator: an *imitatio Dei*. According to Martin Buber, rabbinic teaching has frequently understood the Genesis image of God to mean that “following the deity raises itself . . . to the idea of imitating the deity.”¹⁸ The most prominent expression of this tradition is the imitation of the Creator on the Sabbath, the imitation of God’s seventh day of peace and rest. The original Sabbath immediately follows, and can be juxtaposed with, the Genesis 1 affirmation of humanity as God’s image. It symbolizes a form of rest that is not just passive but also active, something we must do. But this imitative imperative (if we may call it that) also has a more explicitly moral dimension, Buber claims, because imitating God “is what becoming a blessing for the other peoples means: setting a living example of a true people, a community.”¹⁹ The avoidance of graven images coincides with Israel functioning as a different kind of moral image for the world. Despite corruption and violence it is nevertheless possible to represent in one’s actions something of humankind’s original capability for peace and fellowship.

The most systematic exploration of this ethical reading of the image of God is found in the twelfth-century Jewish theologian Moses Maimonides. While Maimonides shares with Thomas, as above, the effort to synthesize biblical religion with the ethics of Aristotle, he does not accept Aristotle’s separation of ethics from imitative poetics. Instead, Maimonides argues for an *imitatio Dei* or imitation of God as humanity’s highest moral perfection. As he puts it, “The perfection, in which man can truly glory, is attained by him when he has acquired—as far as this is possible for man—the knowledge of God, the knowledge of His Providence, and of the manner in which it influences His creatures in their production and continued existence. Having acquired this knowledge he will then be determined always to seek loving-kindness,

¹⁸ Martin Buber, *On the Bible*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken, 1968), 72.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 87.

judgment, and righteousness, and thus to imitate the ways of God."²⁰ Imitation clearly does not here mean only the mimesis of the visible world (as for Aristotle). It means, in a more mythic register, acting in the likeness of a God who is prior and primordial, a God who is this visible world's underlying invisible Creator. Both individuals and the people of God collectively may be defined in part by their primal capability for imitating their Creator's perfect rest and goodness, for imitating what is deepest within humanity itself as God's image rather than what is corrupted in historical actuality.

Similar examples of this ethical imitation or imaging of the Creator can be found, although in less systematically developed ways, in a number of early Christian theologians. Mathetes writes, for example: "Do not wonder that a man may become an imitator of God. He can . . . [who] takes upon himself the burden of his neighbor . . . [and] who, whatever things he has received from God, by distributing these to the needy, becomes a god to those who receive [them]."²¹ Clement of Alexandria exhorts: "He is the [true Christian], who is after the image and likeness of God, who imitates God as far as possible, deficient in none of the things which contribute to the likeness as far as compatible, practicing self-restraint and endurance, living righteously, reigning over the passions, bestowing of what he has as far as possible, and doing good both by word and deed."²² Origen links the imitation of God to contemplative purity: "Every one who imitates Him according to his ability, does by this very endeavor raise a statue according to the image of the Creator for in the contemplation of God with a pure heart they become imitators of Him."²³ And the Pseudo-Clementine literature associates imitation rather flatly with good deeds: "Warn and exhort the worshippers, that by good deeds they imitate Him whom they worship, and hasten to return to His image and likeness."²⁴

What happened to this imitative moral imperative in Christianity? One could argue that it became overshadowed by the growing influence of Platonism. Augustine in particular, as we have seen, refashions Plato's moral-poetic distinction to strongly condemn all image making

²⁰ Moses Maimonides, *A Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. Michael Friedländer (New York: Dutton, 1904), chap. 54.

²¹ Mathetes (anonymous "disciple"), *Epistle of Mathetes to Diogenes*, in *The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), chap. 10.

²² Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1991), bk. 2, chap. 19.

²³ Origen, *Contra Celsum* [Against Celsus], trans. Henry Chadwick (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1953), bk. 8, chap. 18.

²⁴ Pseudo-Clementine, *Recognitions*, in Roberts and Donaldson, *The Apostolic Fathers*, bk. 5, chap. 14.

as unworthy of rest in the one true God. And, it must be said, the early Christian imitative tradition does have a metaethical problem: namely, how to overcome the moral self-deception of idolatry, the turning of humanity's images of God into its own merely finite aims and desires. This problem of original sin, so powerfully articulated by Augustine, is something I will address shortly.

But we may at least ask whether Augustine is right to separate imitation and morality so categorically. Augustine's own cleansing (in effect) of Christian ethics of the *imitatio Dei* rests, in the end, on a deep and problematic Platonic assumption: namely, that images as such can imitate only visible appearances in the world. The plausible alternative that Christianity appears largely to have abandoned is that it is possible also to "imitate" the invisible image of God still deep within ourselves, to turn inward toward our own primordial capabilities for mirroring or reflecting our own Creator. If this origin is lost—this origin of origination, if you will—it may still speak to us from within our own mythological human depths. We may still be able to hear the inner command for fruitfulness and multiplication.

Idolatry, from this perspective, is then not a simple Platonic turning away from morality to poetics, but rather a more self-defeating perversion of a basic human moral poetic capability. Idols in effect objectify or fix something ultimately subjective and unrepresentable. In this case, Gen. 1:27 can be read as affirming not only a passive human *created* goodness—as the Christian tradition has long continued to hold—but also, and at the very same time, an active human *creative* goodness in the limited capability for imitating the activity of Creation itself.

CREATIVE MORAL HERMENEUTICS

Such an interpretation of human moral creativity can be developed in more contemporary and reflective terms through the unique metaethical resources provided by phenomenological hermeneutics. We have largely relied so far on an ancient myth and certain premodern interpretations of it. A postmodern retrieval of moral creativity must be made in a new (and, dare I say, creative) way. In particular, it needs to respond to the above now thoroughly entrenched (and not altogether unwarranted) arguments against the poetic nature of moral activity. Phenomenological hermeneutics helps us avoid reducing moral life to either the application of fixed moral principles (like the starry heavens above, as Kant says) or an opposed retreat into either Nietzschean aestheticism or conserving traditionalism. Each of these options as-

sumes, as I have pointed out, a poetic-ethical separation. Elements of postmodernity open up instead the possibility for viewing morality as an activity in media res, an activity that takes place within particular moral histories but also disrupts and transforms them through their ongoing and dynamic reinterpretation over time. Such a simultaneously passive and active, historical and innovative, contextualized and reflexive understanding of the human moral capability holds the greatest promise for a new appreciation for the inherent creativity of moral life.

We can find some initial resources from phenomenological hermeneutics in the work of Paul Ricoeur, one of the leading hermeneutical ethicists of the twentieth century, and in particular in his "poetics of the will." Adapting the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, Ricoeur argues that ethical willing and action rest ultimately upon a human capability for "ethical intentionality." Moral practice first springs from neither subjective feelings nor objective laws or values but from humanity's dynamic and innovative "desire to be" as an active participant in and shaper of its world. This ethical intentionality or being-in-the-world has religious dimensions in that it may be affirmed, more primordially than historical corruption, as humanity's "absolutely primitive . . . joyous affirmation of being-able-to-be [*pouvoir-être*]." ²⁵ Ethical intentionality is a human capability that is never completed in this world itself. It consists, rather, in each person's inborn ability to create or interpret received historical environments into his or her own ever more coherent and profound meaning.

This hermeneutical approach, briefly stated here, allows us to view moral life as dynamic and changing rather than as either fixed or conserving. It involves humanity in an endless and never fully realized quest for generating new social worlds in relation to one another. Moral values are at once always already passively formed in one's given social historicity and yet always also expressions of particular selves' unique perspectives and capabilities. Moral values are ultimately neither inherited from coherent traditions nor exhausted by the expressions of individual freedom. Rather, as Ricoeur puts it, "values [belong to] a history which I invent. Yes, that is the paradox of value: it is not completely a product of history, it is not invented, it is recognized, respected, and discovered—but only to the extent of my capacity for

²⁵ Paul Ricoeur, "The Problem of the Foundation of Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy Today* 22, nos. 3–4 (1978): 175–92, 177, 178, originally published as "Le problème fondement de la morale," *Sapientia*, no. 3 (juillet–septembre 1973): 313–37.

making history, for inventing history.”²⁶ Ethical intentionality or the “poetics of the will” involves this kind of originary interpretive capability, a mysterious and primordial faculty for investing one’s diverse and complex world and relations with ever greater (or ever less) meaning and direction.

A phenomenology of moral capability allows us to recognize, in this way, a profound link between ethical “intentionality” and what may be called a certain poetic “tensionality.” Ethical intentionality or will may be poetic precisely in the sense that it plays on a basic human tension between inner interpretative capability and outer historical conditions of meaning and possibility. Neither of these subjective or historical dimensions finally exists or has meaning without the other. Historical conditions, from a moral point of view, include anything from plural moral traditions to the complex diversity of history to individual circumstances to the force of the alterity of others to power and the given structures of society. The moral will does not transcend or stand apart from any of these incredibly diverse conditions. Rather, it consists in a capability for creating moral meaning *within* its passively received moral environments, insofar as it actively inhabits and transforms its multiple world relations into a moral identity of its own.

Here, the implied moral “tension” may be compared, by way of illustration, to Sigmund Freud’s rather narrower interpretive hermeneutical “tension” between the active ego and the passivity of the id and the superego. Just as psychological health arises from a productive “working through” of conflicts and repressions at the dynamic intersection of consciousness and the unconscious (in such ongoing practices as dream interpretation, psychoanalytic catharsis, and superego sublimation), so also in moral life may intersubjective and historical tensions move the self toward previously unformed and even cathartic meaning in relation to others. Social, relational, historical, and cultural “tension”—a term that comes from the Latin *tensio* or “stretching”—is a condition for the possibility of moral identity and meaning in the first place. The human moral “desire to be” is realized through an original, unavoidable, restless, and indeed apparently infinite innovation and working through of new social relations.

²⁶ Paul Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, trans. Erazim V. Kohák (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 75, originally published as *Philosophie de la volonté I: Le volontaire et l’involontaire* (Paris: Aubier, 1950).

HERMENEUTICAL NARRATION

This intentional capability includes, for us temporal or historical beings, the possibility for moral narration. Moral narration need not refer merely to the application or living out of moral narratives. It can suggest more fundamentally what actual moral narratives also presuppose: namely, a human moral capability to narrate. It is in narrative stories that ethics is frequently said today to contain a “poetic” dimension, whether in the form of literature, history, or tradition. But this is only to use narratives for some larger independent end—whether that end is greater justice, respect for human differences, or more coherent moral communities. More primordial is the human capability for practicing and realizing narration as a moral end itself.

The Gen. 1:27 myth can be said in part to represent, from this angle, a narrative of the human narrative capability: a narrative of a capability that lies at the very origins or limits of human narration as such. This capability is here represented by humankind being affirmed as an image of a Creator who creates, precisely, by narrating. That is, the Creator is affirmed to have made the world by speech (“And God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light”; “Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness’”) and over a period of time (seven days). Genesis 1 is a story of the world as created by story. As the image of such a Creator, humankind is placed in touch with narration’s ultimate mystery: the impossibility, finally, of narrating our capacity for narration itself. Such can only be mythologized as an image of something invisible and divine: a peculiar form of narration that resists reduction to anything that could ever be understood from actual history. From this angle, human ethical narration is affirmed as an imitation of divine narration. It consists in a primordial capability for simultaneously ahistorical (or free) and historical intentionality over time.

Richard Kearney has recently developed a poetic phenomenology in which moral life is understood as narrative in a similarly radical sense. Kearney argues that human relations call for constant narrative undoing and retelling because they are inherently fragile, finite, and in need of disruption by others. “Our very existence is narrative, for the task of every finite being is to make some sense of what surpasses its limits—that strange, transcendent otherness which haunts and obsesses us, from without and from within.”²⁷ Ethical narration expresses a core

²⁷ Richard Kearney, *Strangers, Gods, and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 231.

human capability for making coherent meaning within the actual limits, strangers, mysteries, and possibilities of one's surrounding world. "The challenge," according to Kearney, "is to envisage the existence of a narrative self prepared to work through the pain of the past in dialogue with its Others . . . [forming] a narrative identity woven from its own histories and those of others."²⁸ (Note here the somewhat Freudian language again of "working through.") The moral task involves an endless narrative "interlacing of alterities" into new and more fully shared narratives of an ever more radically loving and hopeful kind.²⁹

Kearney helpfully suggests that this poetic moral capability is therefore ultimately "religious" in the sense that it stretches human moral understanding beyond its own visible boundaries and limits. "Human existence is always hovering about those frontiers that mark the passage between self and other, real and imaginary, known and unknown. Indelibly marked by finitude, the human self has never ceased to ponder its boundaries or to imagine what lies beyond."³⁰ Taking his cue from Emmanuel Levinas, and to a certain extent the later work of Jacques Derrida, Kearney claims that ethics involves a responsibility to "the other" that must ultimately appear radically "impossible." The deepest passivity of moral life is not the self's tradition-constituted historicity but its responsibility constantly to renew itself before each other as a face of the Wholly Other. According to Kearney, however, it is only through the open-endedness of narration that one can hope finally to give this trace of the Wholly Other the kind of radically self-disrupting response it ultimately demands in this world. (We need not enter here into the phenomenological debate about the possibility/impossibility of "giving.") Only in this poetic mode is the impossible Other not just a disorienting shock but also an "impossible made possible" through the self's endless practice of its own moral world's narrative self-transformation.³¹

This religious capability for moral narration also finds hermeneutical resources in the feminist theological ethics of Sallie McFague. McFague's "metaphorical theology" shows that the fight against violence and oppression in this world is inherently metaphorical, parabolic, storied—and hence a world-transforming practice. For McFague, "metaphors shock, they bring unlikes together, they upset conventions, they

²⁸ Ibid., 188.

²⁹ Ibid., 12.

³⁰ Ibid., 230.

³¹ Ibid., 228.

involve tension, and they are implicitly revolutionary.”³² Poetic language and “tension” not only name difference, according to McFague, but also introduce into moral relations a “liminal” dynamics that opens up harmful differences to radical restructuring.³³ The metaphor of God as Mother, for example, disrupts and challenges traditional patterns of patriarchy by opening up possible new human meaning and relations. The restructuring of moral society is not a flight from the poetics of metaphors—and, I would add, narratives—but rather their ever more radically inclusive refiguration. Indeed, McFague uses female imagery of God to reimagine the very inclusiveness of humanity in God’s image: “As the *imago dei*, we are called to mother, love, and befriend the world, both other human beings and the earth.”³⁴

These poetic hermeneutical perspectives from Ricoeur, Kearney, and McFague help us reimagine the relation of ethics to poetics in a different way than in the powerful and continuing legacy of Platonism. Poetics is more here than either the Greek and premodern imitation of visible actions or the modern (aesthetic) perception of worldly appearances. It instead includes a fundamental, original, and necessarily invisible human moral capability to create social relations that are new and hitherto unimagined. This new poetic hermeneutics in effect recasts the old tradition of the *imitatio Dei*. It suggests—or rather affirms—that creating new moral worlds expresses a human capability that, however lost and corrupt, remains also primordially human. In mythical terms, poetics remains as humankind’s potential for the finite imitation of the world’s original Creator.

What can be imitated, ultimately, is an unimaginable possibility deep within one’s own humanity for narrating one’s moral world anew. A condition for the possibility of moral meaning at all is the ability to interpret, narrate, and transform the brokenness of moral history into a new history that is less meaningless, violent, and oppressive. Moral history so profoundly shapes human moral identity that history’s faults and distortions can be overcome only insofar as humanity can finally be affirmed, through myth, as capable of its own poetic historical narration.

IMITATIO CREATORIS

How, then, in the end, can moral creativity be saved from the traditional Platonic objection to the moral corruptibility of human poetics

³² Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 17.

³³ *Ibid.*, 154.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

itself? This can be done by forging a link between the above contemporary hermeneutical advances and our earlier reflections on humanity as an *imitatio Dei*. Moral life can finally be reclaimed as “poetic” through a fresh and indeed creative mythological affirmation of moral “imitation” as such. This is what I mean by symbolizing humanity as uniquely and originally an *imitatio Creatoris* or “imitation of the Creator.”

As an “imitation of the Creator,” humankind is capable ultimately of the ongoing new creation of its own historical moral world. This capability is historically particular and universally inclusive all at once. It represents an impossible possibility that could never be fully realized so far as any one of us could tell and that in fact is inevitably distorted into the creation instead of moral worlds characterized by meaninglessness, violence, exclusion, and oppression. (This is the case even with the traditional Christian understanding, which I am not following here, of the “New Creation” as the invisible and/or visible church.) Human moral creativity falls short of perfection insofar as it devolves—as it inevitably to one degree or another does—into narrative incoherency, violence toward other humans and creatures, or the marginalization of entire groups from creative social participation of their own.

Yet, on the level of metaethics, an adequate response to human corruptibility in history cannot finally be made on the basis of a Platonic dualism that pits ahistorical morality against changeable poetics. Rather, human corruptibility can be overcome only through a still more primordial affirmation of the human capability for imitating in its own world something of its Creator’s mythical activity of radically inclusive world Creation. The traditional *imitatio Dei* needs to be deepened from mere rest or example of righteousness into an open-ended capability for narrative world transformation.

We can begin to suggest such a possibility for humanity’s *imitatio Creatoris* by rereading the mythology of Genesis 1 in a way more deeply educated by contemporary phenomenological hermeneutics. If humankind is created “in the image” of its Creator, Gen. 1:27 immediately names this image as multiple or plural: “male and female he created them.” Whatever kind of fruitfulness and multiplication may be commanded, it is to take place within human relations’ differences and otherness. The cosmological creation of humankind is also ethical in the sense that it mythologizes ultimate possibilities for otherwise broken or alienated human relations. To be an image of the Creator is not to retreat into isolation or individuality, to assert oneself in domination or power, or to rest within any particular historical community.

It is, rather, to imitate Creation itself in its temporal dynamism, verbal power, productive tensionality, and narrative diversity.

The specific difference of male and female need not here be read literally as a call to biological pro-creation. From a poetic hermeneutical point of view, it both affirms and commands a broader social generativity. The production of biological offspring is one possible form of such generative creativity, and it is surely the most important physical condition for the possibility of the formation of societies over time. But the larger hermeneutical condition for this possibility lies in the narration of meaning over time from amid human plurality and otherness. "Gender" in Gen. 1:27 may be reread as a mythological affirmation of human "generation": the capability for the ongoing "genesis" or "engendering" of human relations and worlds. In this case, the command to imitate God's fruitfulness and multiplication is at least in part a command for humankind in turn to create and renew given society. Male and female are symbols of the primordial moral ability for the kind of (re)productive tension or stretching that may engender new forms of community on the basis of difference.

A similar poetic reading of the Genesis 2–3 story of Adam and Eve helps us relate this command for original creativity to original sin. When read as an eternal pattern for the human moral order, this story has of course been used for millennia to uphold deep structures of gender oppression. But read poetically, the sexual difference instead mythologizes human moral tension in its profound creative ambiguity. Adam and Eve's fall is precisely into "shame" at their generative difference. In hiding their "reproductive" capabilities from one another, humankind in the process hides (in the bushes) from its own very Creator. Human relations lose their dynamic tensionality and crouch in silent stasis.

At the same time, however, the image of the Creator still beckons from within; the Creator's voice can still be heard. The possibility for the imitation of Creation is not altogether lost but hidden and now indirect. This ambiguity can be illustrated by Adam and Eve's joint invention of clothing, their very first postfall act. The loincloths, hastily stitched together, cover over human generative difference. But at the same time, they indicate humanity's persisting if corrupted capability, in the imitation of God, for creating together with one another something altogether new. Clothing is (symbolically speaking) a creative solution to humanity's shame at social difference. The moral tension that each of us actually experiences with others and in society is not only all too inevitably divisive and destructive but also, and ultimately, the

grounds for the promise and hope of social relations that are radically new.

Human community under such fragile circumstances constantly devolves into a community of mere difference alone. The original sin, from a poetic point of view, is the failure to embrace our own deeper capabilities for creating ever more inclusive social worlds. The possibility for a living creative tension among others is on some level always already defeated by the use of human creative faculties in merely limited ways, by historical stasis and consolidations of power, and by all too human anxieties that leave us naked and ashamed before one another. In symbolic terms, the invisible “fruitfulness” of social generativity in the image of a Creator is inevitably (if understandably) overcome by the idolatrous temptation of the visible “fruit” of a fixed and tangible “knowledge of good and evil.” The products of creative life are mistaken for creative life itself. Moral uncreativity is perhaps similar in this respect to bad literature: repetitive of worn-out clichés (as also in Hannah Arendt’s description of the overwhelming reliance on clichés by Adolf Eichmann), lacking a more inclusive movement and tension, or uninvested with openness to larger and wider meaning.³⁵ In any case, the challenge for us morally creative beings is to turn tensions of fear and division in human relations into tensions of inclusive production and multiplication. It is to imitate the Creator’s perfect Sabbath, which is no mere final stasis but a living harmony of the ongoing differences between night and day, land and water, plants and animals, and the whole Creation in all its marvelous and interacting diversity. The expulsion from the Garden of Eden is a loss, from this perspective, not of placid amoral inactivity but of the vital capability for generating, on the basis of human multiplicity and otherness, an ever more complex and diverse narrative of humankind.

In this case, the moral imitation of Creation must inevitably remain both hopeful and problematic. At the center of moral creativity lies the ambiguity of human social tension. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote from his jail cell in Birmingham, Alabama: “I must confess that I am not afraid of the word ‘tension.’ I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a kind of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. . . . [We need] to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and

³⁵ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin, 1963).

racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood.”³⁶ Moral intentionality does not find peace and rest—its desired ethical Sabbath—by fixed values and orders alone, however necessary these may be for limiting violence and oppression, but by embracing as far as possible human tension in its possibility for narrating ever more inclusive moral worlds. The negative prohibitions that “separate” or “part” violent persons and groups should ultimately serve the positive possibility for the “participation” of all in creating community between rather than in spite of human difference.

A hermeneutically sophisticated *imitatio Dei* will therefore resist all too frequent appeals to poetics as merely an expression of individual subjectivity or as its opposite, a representation of a given traditional narrative to be applied and adhered to. Understood instead as an *imitatio Creatoris*, humanity is ultimately responsible for narrating itself over time. Its capability for doing so is presupposed in the fact that human beings tell moral stories and myths at all. The impossible possibility commanded by our own mysterious natures is to imitate our own Creator in creating ever less distorted, violent, and exclusive historical worlds. Those done violence can find herein a deep well of empowerment to work toward transforming the social order. Those who perpetrate violence can discover that social creativity belongs to humanity as such in all its vulnerability, difference, and otherness. In both cases, what is to be imitated, in a hermeneutically dynamic way, is neither a lost nor an eternally fixed moral order but our own morally invisible creative humanity.

CONCLUSION

It would take further work to describe how such an inclusive and narrative human creative capability might realize itself in substantive moral norms.³⁷ Clearly, they would not involve history’s coming to completion or its being left behind in an ahistorical or ineffable transcendence. Clearly also, no single individual could fully imagine what such a perfect narrative creativity would actually look like, involving as it does the working through of the creative tensions of actual human difference, even if each can and must participate. The aim would con-

³⁶ Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail—April 16, 1963,” in *Afro-American Religious History: A Documentary Witness*, ed. Milton C. Sernett (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1985), 433.

³⁷ I have pursued this question to a certain extent in John Wall, *Moral Creativity: Paul Ricoeur and the Poetics of Possibility* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 186–93, and “The Creative Imperative: Ethics and the Formation of Life in Common,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 45–64.

sist in no Hegelian synthesis of historical forces either, for what is to be realized is a dynamic capability for making meaning amid rather than beyond historical plurality. The aim is nothing less than the imitation within our own diverse, complex, and finite moral worlds of a dynamic, narrative, and radically inclusive Creator.

The creative moral capability is ultimately best imagined through the strange language of myth. Myth can simultaneously capture the narrative thickness of actual social dynamics yet also press it toward its own more primordial creative possibilities. Myth arises out of and subjects to critique particular historical conditions. Moral creativity is more concretely imagined the more its mythologization—as, for example, in McFague’s all-embracing Motherhood—disrupts and transforms present history in a freshly inclusive way. The symbolism of a kingdom of God, by contrast, may now imply such hierarchical social domination that it can no longer function well as a symbol of the hoped-for new human community. Gustavo Gutiérrez offers still another possibility of the symbolism of “creative freedom” through “work”: “Humankind is created in the image and likeness of God and . . . fulfills itself only by transforming nature and thus entering into relationships with other persons. Only in this way do persons come to a full consciousness of themselves as subjects of creative freedom which is realized through work.”³⁸ In whatever form, such moral myths are themselves on some level all-too-human creations. Even the myth of the Creator Mother can transform human society only so far. Nevertheless, the value of myth for moral practice and thought lies precisely in its capacity for opening and transforming moral life. It can provoke our easily lost yet always also available faculty for creating together a more profoundly humanized social world.

All I have claimed here, however, is that moral practice involves, even if it is not exhausted by, a primordial creative capability. However such a capability may be realized substantively, my point has been to argue, against a long history in Western moral thought, that such a capability is not ancillary or hostile to moral practice but rather presupposed within it. Poetics is the condition for ethical life’s transformative possibility. What it means to be an *imitatio Creatoris* is to be capable of imitating an invisible and dynamic creativity deeply impressed in the human will. This original human creative capability is absolutely necessary for forming worlds of moral meaning that may overcome historical distortions and violence and respond to human difference.

³⁸ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, trans. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson, 15th anniversary rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 168, originally published as *Teología de la liberación* (Lima: CEP, 1971).

Without it we are likely to retreat into unchanging moral certainties or a simplistic moral pluralism. The more profoundly human possibility is to engage in the endless but ultimately more rewarding task of creating real historical tensions into ever more meaningfully inclusive moral worlds.

These considerations may also help us reflect on the nature of ethics as a disciplinary inquiry. Somewhat like artists, novelists, and even social and physical scientists, ethicists should function, at least in part, as investigators and disrupters of accepted wisdom, imaginers of provocative new moral possibilities, transformers of shared social and cultural worlds, and contributors toward creating more inclusive human meaning. They should do this in creative and fruitful conversation and tension with other disciplines, transforming and being transformed in relation to them.³⁹ Ethicists can contribute to society in both theoretical and practical ways by challenging ingrained moral ideologies, naming and exposing real social tensions, and innovating new possibilities for social and relational worlds and practices—that is, by engaging their world creatively. This task is already part of the ongoing interpretive conversation of ordinary moral culture. Ethicists may raise social dynamics to higher levels of intentional reflection in the hope of helping humanity better respond to its own primordial poetic capability for “making” this a better world.

³⁹ In this respect, my project has similarities with the “multidimensional hermeneutic” approach to religious ethical inquiry proposed by William Schweiker in “On the Future of Religious Ethics: Keeping Religious Ethics, Religious and Ethics,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74, no. 1 (March 2006): 135–51.

“Facie ad Faciem”: Visuality, Desire, and the Discourse of the Other*

Margaret R. Miles / Graduate Theological Union

We are what we look upon and what we desire. (PLOTINUS,
Ennead 4.3.8)

Many people who have a nodding acquaintance with the Platonic tradition think that its most fundamental teaching is that of a line that divides the intelligible from the sensible world and establishes the inestimably greater beauty and reality of the world of ideas.¹ When the dividing line is understood as a metaphysical picture of reality, it seems to advocate that the human good lies in dissociating from, or transcending, the sensible in order to identify with the intelligible. Proof texts from Plato to Augustine and beyond can be cited in support of this interpretation. Indisputably present in the texts, it is, however, a partial and reductive understanding of a complex tradition that received its originary articulation, development, and refinement over at least a thousand-year period.

According to the Platonic account, one's approach to the intelligible is energized by desire. But desire itself is morally neutral. A bad *eros* makes idols of the self and the neighbor. But there is also a good *eros* (*concupiscentia* for the good, as Augustine put it).² Recently, for example, René Girard developed the concept of mimetic desire as an explanation of the origin and ubiquity of violence. He writes: “We don't each have our own desire . . . we borrow desires . . . our neighbor is the model for our desires.”³ If the goods that my neighbor and I desire are

* An earlier version of this article was given as a plenary lecture at the International Colloquium on Violence and Religion in Koblenz, Germany, July 2005.

¹ Plato *Republic* 6.509d.

² A. W. Price, “Plato, Zeno, and the Object of Love,” in *The Sleep of Reason: Erotic Experience and Sexual Ethics in Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. Martha C. Nussbaum and Juha Sihvola (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 183–84.

³ René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, trans. James G. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001), 10. The concept of desire as mimetic challenges Freud's reduction of desire to sexual desire and his identification of the essence of humans as sexuality.

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in short supply, my efforts to possess these goods generate chaos, conflict, and, ultimately, violence. Desire, Girard says, can prompt either imitation of God's "detached generosity" or Satan's covetous idolatry.

Why do we imitate others? Why, as an aspect of this mimesis, do many of us seek the wisdom of a philosophical or religious tradition? Consider the poignant human situation that underlies mimetic desire: a single human life is simply not long enough to figure out from scratch how to address the pressing question, How should we live? We recognize that we do not know what is generously responsible in the particular situations in which we find ourselves. We see with clarity only our own intentions. We do not know the good; we pursue the human good without assurances of its realization. Because of the difficulty of living in and with such ambiguity, we seek suggestions, even directives, from others who have responded to this question. We find or design principles to provide us with guidance that we hope will limit the damages of our actions. Because we recognize that we all, always, must somehow act with conviction in the dark, in uncertainty, we seek reassurance that our choices will actually make the good come into being for us. But finally, whether we recognize it or not, we live by faith.

How is desire generated and stimulated? The role of physical vision in the scenario of desire is critical. In brief, in the Platonic tradition, physical vision informs and supports not one but two epistemologies. The epistemology for which the tradition is famous seems to begin by rejecting or transcending the sensible world of bodies and objects. But there is another, less noticed, epistemology that originates in focused attentiveness to sensible objects. In what follows I seek to demonstrate that physical vision is central to both. I trace the activity of vision in the construction of desire from Plato to Plotinus, and on to the Christian Platonist, Augustine. After sketching this thick terrain, I consider two frequently heard criticisms of the Platonic tradition, namely, that (1) because of an intellectualist bias, bodies are absent and (2) the Other is missing. In concluding, I explore the implications of a desire that is generated and energized by perception of sensible beauty.

PLATO

In Plato's *Symposium*, the male banqueters offer three accounts of the origin of desire (ἐπιθυμεῖν). First, Aristophanes describes the original human beings as round creatures composed of one of three sexes—male, female, or hermaphrodite. These creatures, having four arms and four legs, navigated by turning cartwheels, a rapid and effortless mode

of travel. Their arrogance, however, prompted Zeus to split them in half. Henceforth, Aristophanes said, we seek our other half: individuals split from an original hermaphrodite seek an opposite-sex lover; women split from an original female creature seek another woman to love; men split from a male creature seek a male lover. The happiness of each is to be found, he says, in "the healing of our dissevered nature" by the consummation of love.⁴

Agathon proposes a similar, but less graphic, account of desire. Desire, he says, is generated by lack: "everything longs for what it lacks" (ἐνδεῖα).⁵ Thus far, consensus at the banquet seems to be building that desire is founded on need, lack, poverty. But these accounts merely set the stage for Socrates' exploration of the matter. When called upon, Socrates proclaims himself unable to contribute anything at all to the "flood of eloquence" already unleashed on the assembled company, but he requests permission to ask "a few simple questions."⁶ His questions, of course, quickly lead to an impasse that Socrates proposes to address by describing lessons in the nature of desire given him by Diotima, a Mantinean teacher.

Socrates' account of Diotima's teaching begins by extending and refining the earlier analyses.⁷ Love's parents, Diotima says (according to Socrates), are Resource and Need, Plenty and Poverty; thus, love always includes a component of need.⁸ Combining his mother's poverty and his father's wealth, Love is "at once desirous and full of wisdom, a lifelong seeker after truth." Possessed by a passion for immortality, lovers want "the beautiful to come into being for us."⁹ Desire is the medium by which mortal lovers create immortality: "This is how every mortal creature perpetuates itself. It cannot, like the divine, be still the same throughout eternity; it can only leave behind new life to fill the vacancy that is left in its species by obsolescence. This . . . is how the body and everything else that is temporal partakes of the eternal; there is no other way. . . . the whole creation is inspired by this love, this passion for immortality."¹⁰

⁴ Plato *Symposium* 193c.

⁵ Ibid., 200a.

⁶ Ibid., 198b, 199c.

⁷ Socrates' Diotima rejects the view that "lovers are people who are looking for their other halves"; Plato *Symposium* 205e.

⁸ Ibid., 203b.

⁹ Andrea Nye's translation of γενέσθαι αὐτῷ, literally, "to come to be for someone"; see "Irigaray and Diotima at Plato's *Symposium*," in *Feminist Interpretations of Plato*, ed. Nancy Tuana (University Park: State University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 200.

¹⁰ Plato *Symposium* 208b.

This analysis of human longing assumes and requires the fundamental consanguinity of mortality and immortality, time and eternity.¹¹ Immortality is created within time. But, unlike the blessed immortals who banquet at their ease on Mount Olympus, mortals exist in a constant state of flux. According to Diotima's account, our deepest longing is to create immortality from the stuff of our mortal moments, "the silken weavings of our afternoons," as the poet Wallace Stevens wrote.¹² If this is the case, it becomes highly important to know how this transfiguration can be facilitated, an issue to which I will return.

But Diotima's "final revelation" focuses on a quite different analysis of desire. Rather than build on images of desire as need, she proposes that desire begins with a vivid, overpowering, and transforming vision of beauty. In the former accounts of desire as need based, vision begins the process of ascent; for Diotima's revelation, it is central throughout. Vision is the foundation, ground, impetus, and energy of desire. Diotima tells Socrates that he must "strain every nerve" to understand this analysis of desire.¹³

Beginning with "the beauties of the body," the lover "will fall in love with the beauty of one body." Attentive to that beauty, she then notices that "the beauty of each and every body is the same."¹⁴ So she becomes "the lover of every beautiful body." Next, she notices that "the beauties of the body are as nothing to the beauties of the soul. . . . From this perception, she will be led to contemplate the beauty of laws and institutions [and] the sciences, [finally] turning her eyes toward the open sea of beauty," to "that wondrous vision which is the very soul of the beauty she has toiled for so long, . . . an eternal oneness [of which] every lovely thing partakes." Diotima reiterates the process: "Starting from individual beauties, the quest for the universal beauty must find him ever mounting . . . from bodily beauty to the beauty of institutions, from institutions to learning in general to the special lore that pertains to nothing but the beautiful itself—until at last he comes to know what beauty is."¹⁵

The lover is never required to renounce "lower" forms as she

¹¹ See Peter Manchester, "'As long as that song could be heard': Eternal Time in the *Trinity* of Augustine," in *The Subjective Eye: Essays in Culture, Religion, and Gender* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 59–67.

¹² Wallace Stevens, "Sunday Morning," in *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Knopf, 1978), 66–70.

¹³ Plato *Symposium* 210a; Plato's only treatise on beauty, the *Greater Hippias*, inquires into "what is beauty itself," concluding: "the beautiful things are difficult" (304c). See also Plato *Republic* 4.435c, 6.497d: "τα καλά . . . χαλεπά."

¹⁴ Plato says that all bodies are beautiful (*Symposium* 210b), as does Plotinus (*Ennead* 1.3.2).

¹⁵ Plato *Symposium* 210a–211c.

“mounts” toward “beauty itself.” Rather, Diotima describes an ever-increasing and more inclusive ability to perceive beauty, along with a widening of the benefits of perceiving objects as beautiful.¹⁶ Plato’s attention is on the uprights of the ladder that hold the whole together, not on valuing one rung more than another.¹⁷ Access to beauty is not gained by turning away from beautiful objects, but on penetrating more deeply into their surface beauty. The whole route begins with “one beautiful body.” And this body is never to be scorned in favor of more worthy objects of desire.

Plato emphasizes the physical effects of perceiving beauty through sight, “the keenest mode of perception vouchsafed us through the body.” Again, I summarize:

First there comes upon him a shuddering. . . . Next, with the passing of the shudder, a strange sweating and fever seizes him. For by reason of the stream of beauty entering in through his eyes there comes a warmth, and with that warmth the roots of the soul’s wings are melted . . . [The soul] is feverish and is uncomfortable and itches. . . . [When the soul gazes upon the beloved] she receives a flood of particles streaming therefrom.¹⁸

Clearly, the lover has not observed the beloved and made an aesthetic judgment. Rather, he has *perceived* the beloved *as* beautiful. The perception of beauty is informed by a concept of beauty he has gathered in the process that began with one beautiful body. Perception of beauty is an act with physical symptoms: it is not an intellectual judgment. Heat and desire pass through the eyes to the soul. Long before such experience was analyzed by modern physiology, Plato understood that intense visual experience registers on the skin (sweating, itching), while its signification registers in modulations of heartbeat and breathing (fever, discomfort).

Plato thought of vision as a kind of touch.¹⁹ He described the physiology of the desiring eye:

So much of fire as would not burn, but gave a gentle light, [the gods] formed into a substance akin to the light of everyday life, and the pure fire which is within us and related thereto they made to flow through the eyes in a stream smooth and dense, compressing the whole eye and especially the center part, so that it kept out everything of a coarser nature and allowed to pass only this

¹⁶ Nye, “Irigaray and Diotima at Plato’s *Symposium*,” 201.

¹⁷ Plato *Symposium* 211c.

¹⁸ Plato *Phaedrus* 251a–e.

¹⁹ Later Latin authors (such as Achilles Tatius) extended Plato’s idea of vision as touch to vision as a kind of copulation, calling looking “almost a *mixtus*,” “intercourse,” and also a “συμπλοκή [embrace]”; see Simon Goldhill, “The Erotic Experience of Looking: Cultural Conflict and the Gaze in Empire Culture,” in Nussbaum and Sihvola, *Sleep of Reason*, 378–79.

pure element. When the light of day surrounds the stream of vision, then like falls upon like, and they coalesce, and one body is formed by natural affinity in the line of vision, wherever the light that falls from within meets an external object. And the whole stream of vision, being similarly affected in virtue of similarity, diffuses the motions of what it touches or what touches it over the whole body, until they reach the soul, causing that perception which we call sight.²⁰

In other words, Plato's theory of vision pictured a quasi-physical ray of light projecting from the eyes to touch its object. Vision connects viewer and object, establishing a two-way street on which, as the viewer gazes, the object travels back along the visual ray to imprint itself on the memory, affecting one's character. "Do you think it possible not to imitate the things to which anyone attaches himself with admiration?" Plato asked in *Republic* VI.²¹ Plato's visual ray theory has long been superseded by more accurate accounts of vision yet, as an account of the experience of vision, it has validity. For, as philosopher Maxine Sheets-Johnstone wrote, "The natural power of optics is not strictly a visual lure; whatever attracts us visually or whatever we long to see is not purely a visual datum but something that encompasses or spills over into other sense modalities, most specifically, touch."²²

For Plato, physical vision was the medium of both intimate and cosmic orientation. "Vision," Plato continues, "is the cause of the greatest benefit to us," for observation of the universe prompts research into its nature and thus gives birth to philosophy.²³ Images are the medium in which philosophy must be conducted. "I strain after images," he said.²⁴ Images enable thought, linking the abstract to the concrete. This is possible because, in reality, the visible and the intelligible are one, as his discussion of the perception of beauty and its effects demonstrates. In fact, the "divided line" is one of Plato's most misunderstood images. He made it clear that distinguishing sensible and intelligible into "two entities" is an arbitrary and purely conceptual act.

PLOTINUS

Plotinus did not consider himself a Neoplatonist but rather a faithful interpreter of Plato. He both used and modified Plato's description of

²⁰ Plato *Timaeus* 45b–46c.

²¹ Plato *Republic* 6.500c.

²² Maxine Sheets-Johnstone. *The Roots of Power: Animate Form and Gendered Bodies* (Chicago: Open Court, 1994), 28.

²³ Plato *Timaeus* 47b–c.

²⁴ Plato *Republic* 6.488a: "ὡς γλίσχρως εἰκάξω."

the role of vision in desire. Like Plato, Plotinus noticed the physical effects of seeing beauty, namely, “wonder and a shock of delight, and longing and passion and a happy excitement,” a “wild exultation” that is its most intense when a beautiful soul is revealed “in yourself or in someone else.”²⁵

Plotinus’s only polemical treatise, *Ennead* 2.9, made explicit his admiration and esteem for sensible beauty: “There are such beauties in things perceived by the senses that one admires their maker and believes that they come from a higher world, and *judging from them* says that the beauty there is overwhelming; one does not cling to them, but goes on from them to the beauties of the higher world, but without insulting these beauties here.”²⁶

What is the status of the object of vision? As everyone who has read about Plotinus knows, matter opposes intellect—yes, as the opposable thumb opposes the fingers of the hand; both thumb and fingers are necessary for effective use of the hand. That is precisely how matter opposes intellect, as its necessary and essential colleague.²⁷ It is unproblematic, then, for Plotinus to say that the sensible world is an *image* (εἰκόν) of the great beauty that forms and informs the universe. To see the visible world as icon is to apprehend its reality, to imagine the real.

The Plotinian terms for describing the relationship of visible to invisible have generated a great deal of misunderstanding, leading to characterizations of Neoplatonism as “dualistic.” Translations have not helped at this point: when Plotinus says that the visible is a “reflection” of the invisible, even his best translator, A. H. Armstrong (for Loeb Classical Library), adds the word “only”—“only a reflection.”²⁸ But Plotinus made it clear that “perfect” would more accurately modify “reflection”:

What other fairer image of the intelligible world could there be? For what other fire could be a better image of the intelligible than the fire here? Or what other earth could be better than this, after the intelligible earth? And what sphere could be more exact or more dignified or better ordered in its circuit after the self-enclosed circle there of the intelligible universe? And what other sun could there be which ranked after the intelligible sun and before this visible sun here?²⁹

[The visible world is] coherent, and clear and great and everywhere life,

²⁵ Plotinus *Ennead* 1.6.4, 1.6.5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.9.17; emphasis added.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.3.6.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.4.5.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.9.4.

manifesting infinite wisdom, how should one not call it a clear and noble image of the intelligible gods? If, being an image, it is not that intelligible world, this is precisely what is natural to it; if it was the intelligible world, it would not be an image of it. But it is false to say that the image is unlike the original; for nothing has been left out which it was possible for a fine natural image to have.³⁰

Of course, the problem, for any philosopher who distinguishes intellectual and physical experience, is to exhibit also their interconnection. Lacking distinctions, the universe would be, in Plato's memorable phrase, a "miserable mass of unmixed messiness"—in a word, chaos.³¹ Plato had several proposals for demonstrating the unity of the universe. Mathematics, he said, participates in both intellectual and sensible.³² Moreover, as we have seen, vision crosses the dividing line, producing both strong physical and mental effects. Like Plato, Plotinus distinguished only for the purpose of showing the orderliness of the universe. But his primary interest was always on seeing the one thing, the "One thing."³³ He taught that visible objects themselves, endowed with "a beauty that is not visual but becomes visible," link the intelligible and sensible world.³⁴ Beauty is the most direct and vivid evidence of the visible world's status as icon of the great beauty.

Because the concept of image (εἶκον), trace (ἵχνος), reflection, or shadow (σκιᾶ) is so crucial to his metaphysics, Plotinus specified carefully what he meant by it. Image, as represented by paintings, he said, is not the "strict and proper sense" of "image." Paintings do not require for their existence the presence of the original; indeed, paintings are often done to remind viewers of the original in its absence.³⁵ But images that appear in mirrors, pools of water, or shadows depend on the presence of the original. When the original vanishes, so does the image. In fact, the existence of each depends on the other, for the original must, by its very nature, generate a reflection: "for it is utterly impermissible (θεμιτὸν) that there should be no beautiful image of

³⁰ Ibid., 2.9.8, and see also 5.8.6: "What could be more beautiful than this visible universe?"

³¹ Plato *Philebus* 64e.

³² Plato described mathematics as beautiful; see *Greater Hippias* 303c.

³³ "If the truest life is life by thought, and is the same thing as the truest thought, then the truest thought lives, and contemplation, and the object of contemplation at this level, is living and life, and the two together are one"; see Plotinus *Ennead* 3.8.8, and also 5.9.8: "Being and Intellect are therefore one nature . . . one thing. . . . But they are thought of by us as one before the other *because they are divided by our thinking*."

³⁴ Price, "Plato, Zeno, and the Object of Love," in Nussbaum and Sihvola, *Sleep of Reason*, 184.

³⁵ Plotinus *Ennead* 6.4.10.

beauty and reality."³⁶ This kind of image would no longer exist "if cut off from that from which it is," for "the image has its existence in the strict and proper sense from the prior original, and comes to be from it, and it is not possible for what has come to be to exist cut off from it."³⁷ This description values "image" very differently than as inferior to "the real thing."

However, Plotinus's primary interest has moved from Plato's interest in the inspiring/inspiring beauty of objects to the perceiver's activity in seeing the great beauty in objects in the sensible world.³⁸ For Plotinus, beauty is not perceived by the sluggish eye, the eye that waits passively to be caught by the enchanting object as Plato's "beautiful body" "caught the eye." Rather, the ability to see as beauty is the result of a strenuous and patient effort, a spiritual discipline. Plotinus modified the Platonic account of vision and desire:

How then can you see the sort of beauty a good soul has? Go back into yourself and look; and if you do not yet see yourself beautiful, then, just as someone polishing a statue which has to be beautiful cuts away here and polishes there and makes one part smooth and clears another until he has given his statue a beautiful face, so you too must cut away excess and straighten the crooked and clear the dark and make it bright and never stop working on your statue until the divine glory of virtue shines out in you, till you see your self-mastery enthroned upon its holy seat.

If you have become this, and see it, and are at home with yourself in purity, with nothing hindering you from becoming in this way one, with no inward mixture of anything else, but wholly yourself, nothing but true light . . . when you see that you have become this, then you have become sight; you can trust yourself then; you have already ascended and need no one to show you; concentrate your gaze and see. . . . This alone is the eye that sees the great beauty. . . . For one must come to the sight with a seeing power made akin and like to what is seen. No eye ever saw the sun without becoming sun-like, nor can a soul see beauty without becoming beautiful. You must first become all god-like and all beautiful if you expect to see god and beauty.³⁹

In short, Plotinus asked himself, If desire is generated and directed by vision, how is desire for the invisible generated? And he answered: by seeing as beauty. To see as beauty is to see an object in its life, to grasp the connections by which it exists. Seeing beauty depends on the

³⁶ Ibid., 5.8.12; Armstrong translates the term as "unlawful."

³⁷ Ibid., 6.4.10; see also 5.8.12: "Every natural image exists as long as its archetype is there. . . . As long as that higher reality gives its light, the rest of things can never fail; they are there as long as it is there; but it always was and will be."

³⁸ μέγα κάλλος; see Plotinus *Ennead* 1.6.9.

³⁹ Ibid.

beholder. It is a spiritual discipline that is trained and exercised by contemplation.⁴⁰ I return to this point.

AUGUSTINE

Augustine's account of desire builds on that of Plato and Plotinus, with some interesting and important differences. Augustine adopted Plato's theory of the visual ray that touches its object as a perfect model for his description of both the potential danger of desire and for his account of positive desire resulting in the vision of God. Augustine, always interested in the way things work, gave a detailed description of the mechanics of desire:

The force of love is so great that the mind draws in with itself those things upon which it has long reflected with love, and to which it has become attached through its devoted care [*curae glutino inhaeserit*], even when it returns in some way to think of itself. And because they are bodies which it has loved outside of itself through the senses of the body, and with which it has become entangled by a kind of daily familiarity, it cannot bring them into itself as though into a country of incorporeal nature, and, therefore, it fastens together their images, which it has made out of itself, and forces them into itself. For in forming them it gives them something of its own essence. . . . But the mind errs when it binds itself to these images with a love so strong as even to regard itself as something of this kind.⁴¹

Like Plato and Plotinus, Augustine described two epistemologies; whether he invoked one or the other depends upon whether he exhorts readers to notice something other than sensible objects, or whether he seeks to specify their metaphysical value.⁴² In these differ-

⁴⁰ M. R. Miles, *Plotinus on Body and Beauty* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 45–46. Plotinus, in his own time as in ours, has frequently been accused of denigrating visible objects. He explained that he did so reluctantly, and only for teaching purposes: “One must therefore speak in two ways to people who are in this state of mind [utter ignorance of God] if one is going to turn them around . . . and to lead them up to what is highest, one, and first. What . . . are these two ways? One shows how contemptible are the things now honored by the soul; . . . the other teaches and reminds the soul how high its birth and value are, and this is prior to the other one and when it is clarified will also make the other obvious” (*Ennead* 5.1.1; see also 5.8.12). Plotinus says in this passage that he will develop the first method “elsewhere,” but he never did. His sustained interest lay, not in denigrating body and the visible world, but in the second method, that is, displaying soul's origin and value.

⁴¹ Augustine *De trinitate* 10.5–6.

⁴² Jean-Luc Marion's distinction between the idol and the icon is helpful. The idol absorbs the gaze, dazzling it and saturating it with the visible, ravishing it. “The icon, on the other hand, summons the gaze to surpass itself by never freezing on a visible, since the visible only presents itself here in view of the invisible. . . . The icon opens to the gaze, enabling sight to go back “infinitely from the visible to the invisible by the grace of the visible itself. . . . The icon opens in a face, where man's sight envisages nothing, but goes back infinitely from

ent contexts, a sensible object can be either a distraction or an indispensable starting point. Nothing about the object determines whether it will act as one or the other. Two passages, written twenty-five years apart in *Confessions* and *De trinitate*, address Augustine's method that begins with sensible objects. Refusing to take their existence as given, Augustine questions sensible objects vigorously:

And what is this God? I asked the earth and it answered: "I am not he, and all things that are on the earth confessed the same. I asked the sea . . . the creeping things . . . the blowing breezes, the heaven, the sun, the moon, the stars." . . . And I said to all those things that stand about the gates of my senses: "Tell me about my God. Tell me something about him." And they cried out in a loud voice: "He made us." My question was in my contemplation of them, and their answer was in their beauty.⁴³

The open secret of the created universe is revealed to the one who asks the question that elicits its beauty: "He made us." For Augustine, the significance of the beauty of sensible objects is that they were created by the great beauty, "Beauty so ancient and so new."⁴⁴

Similarly, in *De trinitate*, Augustine seeks the "goodness of every good" by noticing the goodness of sensory objects. I summarize a long passage: "the earth, its lofty mountains, its gentle hills, its level plains, the beauteous and fertile land, the well-built house, bodies of living things, pleasant and healthful food, health, and the human face, poems, and profound thought. . . . This is good and that is good. . . . Take away 'this' and 'that,' and look, if you can, upon good itself. Then you will see God, the goodness of every good, . . . the good Good."⁴⁵

Augustine's method is abstraction. But the pejorative connotations of modern usage of the word "abstraction" conceal Augustine's intent. Augustine abstracted "the good Good" from the many good objects he gathered, not by jettisoning those objects, but by looking more deeply into them. Their surface beauty and goodness urgently invites the attentive observer to consider them "in the life," that is, in their structure, their essence, and the source of their existence.

Thus far, Augustine has elucidated and Christianized his Platonic mentors. But he did not enjoy their self-confidence about the possibility of accurate judgment. He was acutely aware of the fragility and fallibility of discernment. For, as Herbert Fingarette has remarked, "the

the visible to the invisible by the grace of the visible itself. . . . The icon opens in a face that gazes at our gazes in order to summon them to its depth"; see *God Without Being* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 19.

⁴³ Augustine *Confessions* 10.6.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.29.

⁴⁵ Augustine *De trinitate* 8.4.3.

easiest person to deceive is oneself.”⁴⁶ In *The Spirit and the Letter*, Augustine analyses why self-deception is an inevitable and pervasive feature of human life:

Perfect righteousness . . . would come about if there were brought to bear the will sufficient for such an achievement; and that might be, if all the requirements . . . were known to us, *and* if they inspired in the soul such delight as to overcome the obstacle set by any other pleasure or pain. . . . For we are well aware that the extent of a person’s knowledge is not in his own power, and that he will not follow what he knows to be worth pursuing unless he delight in it no less than it deserves his love. . . . We often go wrong in the belief that what we do is pleasing or not pleasing to God. . . . “For we see now through a glass darkly, but then face to face.”⁴⁷

Augustine invoked the scriptural text to which he referred more frequently than any other throughout his authorship, 1 Cor. 13:12.⁴⁸ Two major, and fundamentally insurmountable, obstacles, he said, prevent the attainment of perfect love of God: inadequate knowledge and insufficient attraction. In the face of these obstacles, the best strategy is to work with the very desire that had become glued to certain objects, reorienting that desire. From the “footballs, nuts, and pet sparrows” of childish attachment and the “gold, estates, and slaves” of adult acquisitive desires, to “my weight is my love; by it I am carried wherever I am carried.”⁴⁹ But how is this to be done, if we cannot choose what delights us and we do not have the knowledge we need to make accurate and realistic choices? Recall Augustine’s epistemology that begins by questioning sensible objects and ends in the revelation of their beauty. Augustine valued beauty because beauty generates love, and it is love that supplies the energy and momentum necessary for seeing the great beauty, for “unless we already love him, we shall never see him.”⁵⁰

TWO CRITIQUES OF THE PLATONIC TRADITION

Plato, Plotinus, and Augustine all urged that the self be intentionally constructed by imitation of “the one thing.” I now consider briefly the most articulate proponents of two very widespread current criticisms of the Platonic tradition. Usually, these criticisms are based on proof

⁴⁶ Herbert Fingarette, *Self-Deception* (New York: Humanities Press, 1969), 2.

⁴⁷ Augustine, *The Spirit and the Letter* 64 (xxxvi), in *Augustine: Later Works*, ed. John Burnaby, Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1955), 247.

⁴⁸ “Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate; tunc autem facie ad faciem.”

⁴⁹ Augustine *Confessions* 1.19; see also 13.9: “Pondeus meus amor meus; eo feror quaecumque feror,” and *De trinitate* 14.17.23.

⁵⁰ Augustine *De trinitate* 8.6.4.

texts and selective readings of Platonic authors in translation, but the two authors I consider have carefully articulated criticisms that are worth our attention. The French feminist Luce Irigaray criticizes Western fascination with "the one thing" and its failure to account for otherness. And the philosopher Maxine Sheets-Johnstone criticizes the Western philosophical tradition's erasure of body, the result of its attention to language as "the only location of meaning."⁵¹

First, Irigaray: Advocacy of mimetic desire for the "one thing," she says, precludes committed attention to diversity, multiplicity, and difference—in short, to otherness. It does not foster "recognizing the other *as* an other who is different from me: neither me nor mine, nor *alter ego*, nor the same, nor like me."⁵² She criticizes "monosexual discourse," calling for attention to "the important role gender plays in defining subjectivity, rationality, [and] truth."⁵³ The "one thing" model, often existing at the level of unexamined assumption, she says, legislates and invokes "the neuter in an artificial and violent way."⁵⁴ Moreover, the "one thing" model assumes a closed energy system in which attention can be directed either to sensory objects or to intelligible objects. "We have decided that what we touch with our hands is never as real, good, or beautiful as what we produce with our intellect."⁵⁵ According to this model, "sublimating my sensible immediacy seems to be a condition of my authority to speak of truth."⁵⁶

Sheets-Johnstone articulates a related concern. Writing from a sociobiological perspective, her attention to the primacy of animate form leads to questioning language-based cultural critics. She finds intercorporeality the foundation of relationship. For example, our concept of power, she writes, arises from an "intercorporeal semantics," not from language, with its identification of an "abstract intersubjectivity."⁵⁷ "By absenting ourselves as bodies," she says, "we erase ourselves as subjects."⁵⁸ The visible body is the location of an "optics of power." It is "not a *tabula rasa* on which power makes its marks: the body is already inscribed and potent."⁵⁹

In the Platonic authors we have surveyed, we noticed their descrip-

⁵¹ Sheets-Johnstone, *Roots of Power*, 11.

⁵² Luce Irigaray, *To Be Two*, trans. Monique M. Rhodes and Marco F. Cocito-Monoc (New Brunswick, NJ: Athlone, 1999), 107.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 103–4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁵⁷ Sheets-Johnstone, *Roots of Power*, 57.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

tions of an intentional, incremental, cumulative activity of discerning a beauty that the socialized eye is unprepared to notice. This epistemology's starting point is bodies. Yet it must be conceded that an inevitable and irreducible ambiguity remains. Bodies are the condition and the stimulus for generating desire and energizing it for pursuit of the beautiful. But they are also stepping stone, or bottom rung of the ladder, leading to the beautiful. In sum, we can respond to criticism of the intellectualist bias perceived in Platonic texts in two ways. On the one hand, closer attention can be paid to the alternative epistemology I have sketched. Having done so, on the other hand, it must be acknowledged that the Platonic tradition exhibits a fundamental and irreducible ambivalence about the status of the sensible world and the significance of its beauty.

Is it possible to discover in Platonic tradition the absent body and the missing Other? I think it is. I suggest that our inattention to the role of physical vision has distorted our interpretations of Plato, Plotinus, and Augustine. We can now, in conclusion, reprise the role of physical vision in generating and energizing a spiritual vision that recognizes and values bodies and others.

First, in the regime of the visual, self and the other configure in the same activity, the activity of looking.⁶⁰ As Sheets-Johnstone remarks: "To see is to see Others. We cannot, in fact, readily escape seeing Others; we can only readily escape acknowledging them . . . the simple act of looking has the power to . . . structure the nature and dynamics of what is a virtually inescapable intercorporeality."⁶¹ All living bodies are beautiful, complex, coordinated collections of precision skills that together create our sense of the person. When we do not see the beauty of a particular body, when we miss noticing the person's life represented by that body, it is because we are accustomed to seeing only certain bodies as beautiful. We are also taught as children not to stare at anyone, that is, not to look at people attentively enough to discern their lives as revealed by their bodies.

Let us be more precise: recall Augustine's favorite verse, "We see *now* through a glass darkly, *then* however, face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12). Emmanuel Levinas, has described the "face-to-face" encounter as "the primordial production of being."⁶² He ignores Augustine's primary focus, the antitheses, "*nunc . . . tunc*." In Levinas's interpretation, the verse

⁶⁰ This is Simon Goldhill's phrase; see his "Erotic Experience of Looking," in Nussbaum and Sihvola, *Sleep of Reason*, 394.

⁶¹ Sheets-Johnstone, *Roots of Power*, 32.

⁶² Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1961), 305.

that explained so much to Augustine about the frustrations and imperfections of present experience becomes simply a description of a moment in which my recognition of the specific and particular beauty of a face simultaneously illuminates my understanding of myself and of the person I see. The face is “the way in which the other presents himself, exceeding *the idea of the other in me*, . . . an encounter of unique beings that represents both separation and proximity; it is a breach of totality in which thought finds itself faced with an other refractory to categories.”⁶³

The ancient theory of the visual ray explained to its adherents why vision generates desire for physical objects. Vision touches its object, which then moves back along the visual ray, stamping its imprint on the psyche. But if physical vision informs and directs desire for visible objects, how is desire for the invisible Good, the One, or God generated? It is at this point that the Platonic tradition became ambivalent. Physical vision is problematic when it stops short at the surface of objects, making them idols. Yet physical vision is still the key. For to perceive the beauty of people and objects is to discern Plotinus’s “great beauty,” Augustine’s “beauty so old and so new.” The great informing beauty gives significance to beautiful objects.⁶⁴ The “opposing” entities of sensible and intelligible generate a cyclical oscillation in which each energizes and escalates the other. Spiritual vision relies on physical vision: the traces, images, and shadows of the great beauty in the visible world are the first clues, the necessary information, prompting the lover of beauty to practice the spiritual discipline of seeing as beauty. Moreover, Augustine claimed that the accurate “seeing” of physical objects irreducibly involves the exercise of spiritual vision; to see accurately is to see lovingly, to participate in the very substance of the God-who-is-love.

Furthermore, desire based on the perception of beauty suggests a different mimesis. Specifically, the role of “the other” is altered. Beauty is not scarce; thus, desire instigated by beauty is neither competitive nor conflictual. Rather, mutual others encourage, model, and urge each other on to ever more expansive and inclusive perceptions of beauty. The other is not an opponent, but a friend who helps me to notice beauty that my experience and visual habits had not prepared me to see.⁶⁵

I have directed attention to a feature of the Platonic tradition that

⁶³ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁴ Augustine wrote, in *De doctrina Christiana* 1.22, “Whatever else appeals to the mind as being lovable should be directed into that channel into which the whole torrent of love flows.”

⁶⁵ Plato *Symposium* 209c.

has received much less sustained attention than Platonism's celebrated emphasis on transcending bodies, with their terrifying instability. Transcendence, useful as it is in painful situations, is dangerous as a daily habit. Beyond the goal of a more accurate representation of Platonic tradition, my interpretation has practical implications. It is impossible to state with precision to what extent the influence of assumptions about, and interpretations of, Platonic tradition have perpetuated detachment from the world's problems. It is likely, however, that, despite loud academic protests against "Platonic dualism," some influence can be hypothesized. Thus it is important to examine and correct reductive interpretations. "What we misapprehend we cannot use," said Thomas Traherne in the seventeenth century.⁶⁶

Recognizing the role of physical vision in both Platonic epistemologies challenges spiritualities that encourage escape from the twenty-first-century world's pressing problems of hunger, injustice in its myriad forms, and ecological disaster. When the capacity to see as beauty is understood to be fundamental to spiritual vision, enjoyment of the created world can energize work to preserve and sustain it. Platonic tradition's articulation and emphasis on enjoyment of beauty can correct an escapist transcendence. For, within this tradition, it is precisely the beauty of bodied others that makes pop into the eye what Augustine called the "beauty of all things beautiful."⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Thomas Traherne, *Centuries of Meditations* (1908 [Bertram Dobell's ed.]; repr., Surrey: Shrine of Wisdom, 2002), 4.15.

⁶⁷ Augustine *Confessions* 3.6: "pulchritudo pulchrorum omnium."

Schicksalsanalyse and Religion Studies

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I. SCHICKSALSANALYSE AND RELIGION STUDIES

The contemporary study of religion has benefited greatly from dialogues with depth psychology and psychiatry. In this study I consider the work of the Hungarian-born Swiss psychiatrist Leopold Szondi (1893–1986) as a major resource for the study of religion. While not well known in the English-speaking world, Szondi was an eminent medical scholar who produced, under conditions of political persecution, war, and exile, a large, magisterial body of literature known as the *Analysis of Destiny* (*Schicksalsanalyse*), which remains largely untranslated.

The aim of this essay is (1) to present Szondi's theory of religion in its biographical and historical context and (2) to discuss specific concepts in his theory, namely, those of the familial unconscious, Cain-Moses polarity, and pontifical ego. These three themes are chosen because they reflect Szondi's pioneering pedigree studies, his clarification of the psychiatric aspects of epilepsy, and his transpersonal synthesis of depth psychology. The familial unconscious is presented in terms of his concept of *genotropism* and applied to the symbolic forms of tribal religion. The Cain-Moses polarity is addressed as a paroxysmal-epileptoid ground of evil and justice within the psychology of monotheism. The pontifical ego, representing religious experience at the highest level of relatedness and symbolized by the bridge, is evaluated on the bases of the Indo-Persian and Latin traditions of the sacred bridge.

As a systematic psychiatry bearing a religious depth psychology, Szondi's work has both historical significance and relevance to the contemporary study of religion. He has developed a wide-ranging approach to understanding the psychological, metaphysical, and theological aspects of religious experience.

II. SZONDI'S PERSONAL FAITH

Leopold Szondi was born in Nyitra, Hungary, on March 11, 1893, but at the time the family name was Sonnenschein. He was the twelfth son of his father, Abraham, and the eighth of his mother, Theresa Kohn Sonnenschein. Theresa, the second wife of Abraham, was illiterate and frequently ill, and the family lived in poverty. Abraham was a shoemaker who tended to neglect his work in order to study the Talmud and Hasidic writings, and the son once described his father as a progressive or "neologe" Jew but not Orthodox.¹ His godfather was Rabbi Mordechai Vorhand of Nyitra, which had had a thriving Jewish community since 1750 and was the home of a rabbinic dynasty. At his bar mitzvah, Leopold Sonnenschein chose two chapters from Exodus as his scriptural passages, one on the ordination of priests (Exodus 29) and the other on the episode of the golden calf (Exodus 32).² He also faithfully attended Torah readings with his father at the synagogue.

In 1911, his father died, and Leopold observed shivah and *sheloshim*. He was the only son to recite the Kaddish prayer, morning and evening, in the synagogue in the year of mourning following the death. After his father's death, Leopold Sonnenschein changed his name to Szondi in order to become an assimilated Jew within Christian Magyar Hungary. In an autobiographical essay he states that in the year of mourning he introjected his father into his ego and that the image of his father sustained him, even after giving up the dogmatic rituals of Judaism.³ He also says he remained a Jew and a believer.

Szondi's medical studies were interrupted in 1914, when he was drafted into the Austro-Hungarian army as a "battalion doctor." He served mainly at the Russian and Italian fronts for nearly the entire war and was decorated twice for displaying extraordinary courage under fire. While in combat, he came to terms with death but nevertheless thought that only killing and living existed.⁴ Out of the trench warfare, the problem of killing would become a lifelong issue for his theory of religion.

After the war, Szondi received the MD degree in 1919, amid the Bela Kun uprising, and he decided to specialize in neurology, internal med-

¹ Karl Bürgi-Meyer, *Leopold Szondi: Eine biographische Skizze* (Zurich: Szondi, 2000), 17–18. Further biographical information may be found online at <http://www.leopold-szondi.ch> and <http://www.szondiforum.org>.

² Zulu Lakner-Faingold, "Leopold Szondi: Der Mensch, die Lehre und die Ahnenquelle" (unpublished lecture, University of Zurich, March 13–14, 1993), 3–4.

³ Ludwig Pongratz, ed., "Leopold Szondi," in *Psychotherapie in Selbstdarstellungen* (Bern: Huber, 1973), 414.

⁴ Dino Larese, *Leopold Szondi: Eine Lebensskizze* (Geneva: Amriswiler Bücherei, 1976), 16; Bürgi-Meyer, *Leopold Szondi*, 29.

icine, and psychiatry; but he would always be concerned primarily with genetics.⁵ Married to Lili Radvanyi in 1926, he became the father of a daughter, Vera, in 1928 and a son, Peter, in 1929. Vera would convert to Roman Catholicism in 1970, but Peter would remain Jewish. In 1927 Szondi was appointed professor and director of the Royal Hungarian Laboratory for Pathology and Therapy in Budapest. From the time of his dual appointments until 1941, Szondi conducted many pedigree studies and posed the following question: why did seemingly normal and healthy couples fall in love, marry, and give birth to defective offspring? He theorized that deleterious latent recessive genes conditioned the attraction and became manifest in the offspring. Szondi also made a major contribution to psychiatry by demonstrating that epilepsy, migraines, and stuttering were genetically related.

At the laboratory Szondi labored intensely under a heavy workload, while in the background hostile political forces were becoming increasingly dangerous. Since 1919, clandestine paramilitary bands had been waging an ethnic cleansing against assimilated Jews in the Hungarian White Terror. In 1935 Szondi became the target of political attacks as the preeminent Jewish doctor of the nation, and after 1939 he could not publish his books but only circulate them in mimeograph form. In 1941 the pro-Nazi state stripped Szondi of his titles and positions, thereby ending his teaching and research. On March 19, 1944, German Nazi troops invaded Budapest with eleven divisions, under orders of Adolf Hitler, to destroy Hungarian Jewry. Consequently, Szondi lost his home and, wearing the yellow Star of David, was forced into a Jewish ghetto along with his family.

The American Red Cross and the Jewish community arranged for 1,683 Jews, including the Szondi family, to emigrate to Israel. On June 29, 1944, the Szondis left Budapest by train, believing they were beginning the long trip to Israel, but instead after ten days arrived at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. In an essay on camp life, Lili Szondi-Radvanyi reports that her husband stayed in separate men's barracks—dark, dirty, and unheated—with about one hundred men, and he conducted seminars at night, essentially working as a caregiver. She taught Hebrew to the children, led them in singing to cope with the extreme hunger, and practiced a meditation technique of contemplating a better world without falling into a delusion.⁶

The Szondis became extremely emaciated but, facing death by star-

⁵ Paul Harmat, *Freud, Ferenczi und ungarische Psychoanalyse* (Tübingen: Edition Diskord, 1988), 220–24.

⁶ Lili Szondi-Radvanyi, "Ein Tag in Bergen-Belsen," *Sonderheft der Szondiana: Leopold Szondi zum 100. Geburtstag* 1993, 54.

vation, were unexpectedly released on December 6, 1944. On leaving the camp a Nazi S.S. officer seized four book manuscripts from Szondi, ripped out the pages with penciled notes, assuming they might be comments about camp life, and threw them on the ground. When Szondi protested, the officer returned them to him. This humane gesture enabled Szondi to publish the manuscripts after the war. Many years later, in an interview, Szondi recalled that "even in the bloodiest Cain there is a touch of Abel, a touch of humanity: that all hope isn't lost after all. It's that perhaps which kept me alive, despite everything."⁷

The Szondis were taken to the Caux refugee camp at St. Gallen, Switzerland, and quarantined from December 10, 1944, until final liberation on January 26, 1945. At the invitation of Oscar Forel, medical director of a hospital in Prangins near Nyon, Szondi became the chief physician of the children's clinic.⁸ He spent thirteen months at the clinic, working with disturbed emigrant children. Deciding neither to return to Hungary nor to emigrate to the United States, he chose in March 1946 to settle in Zurich. He had hoped to work at the Bûrgholzli Hospital in Zurich, but Swiss law forbade foreign doctors from practicing medicine in Switzerland. Consequently, his work was restricted to a private practice of psychotherapy, and his personal life was one of social isolation.

After settling in Zurich, Szondi published the second edition of his major work of family studies, *Analysis of Destiny*. The first edition already had been published in Switzerland at the time of the Nazi invasion of Hungary in 1944. In the second edition he stated that his work shattered two infantile illusions of humankind. One is the illusion of absolute independence from (*Freiseins von*) God and heredity, and the other is that of total normality or the illusion that behind every healthy phenotype lies a fully healthy genotype.⁹ He also explains that since we are not independent from God or heredity, we exist in relationship with one another, in love, friendship, and the mystical union of faith. The relation is that of the "between" (*das Zwischen*), as taught by Martin Buber.

In the postwar period Szondi delivered lectures to increasingly larger audiences, and one student remembered his saying that "when I speak of the Spirit I mean God's Holy Spirit, and when I say God I under-

⁷ Alexandre Szombati, "A Touch of Abel," *Guardian*, May 9, 1982.

⁸ Karl Bûrgi-Meyer, "Leopold Szondi als Flûchtling in der Schweiz," *Szondiana* 15 (1995): 72.

⁹ Leopold Szondi, *Schicksalsanalyse*, 2nd ed. (Basel: Schwabe, 1948), 18-19.

stand the God of the Bible.”¹⁰ From the same source we learn that, for Szondi, human existence has a transcendent, nonrational ground of being, which may be known only by negation. God is the ground of being, from which humanity has no independence.

In a 1954 lecture, published posthumously, Szondi explores faith as the “royal road” to humanization, and he explains that humans have a fundamental “need for faith” that must be satisfied.¹¹ The need for faith is just as basic as any other human need, such as aggression or attachment, and it is grounded in the ego. Szondi defines the ego as the primal drive for participation in social and metaphysical reality, and he points out that the participatory ego arises in infancy by means of projection, unfolds dialectically by transcending and adapting, and strives to achieve an essential wholeness throughout the life span. Biographically, Szondi’s need for faith was closely related to the mystical incorporation of his father.

Failure to satisfy the need for faith results in death anxiety, hypochondria, various phobias, and mental delusions. Human existence is a constant struggle against loneliness and the threats of death, and in that struggle the ego cannot stand alone as an omnipotent being. Speaking as a physician, Szondi prescribes a transfer of one’s power of being onto a transcendent spiritual dimension, wherein one becomes fully humanized. Atheism signifies either an inflated state of omnipotence or projection of one’s own power onto the laws of nature or society. Only with the spiritual transference, culminating in a participation with God, may one resolve the anxiety of death, overcome existential loneliness, and assume moral responsibility. Szondi concludes his lecture by defining faith as the “eternal, mystical, transcendent participation with the Spirit.”¹² Hence, faith is a mystical union not in the sense of the absorption of the ego, but as an “I-Thou” encounter, as Buber also taught.

Two years later, Szondi published his ego psychology, attempting to lay a foundation for the integration of the schools of depth psychology. He uncovers the Indo-Germanic root of *Glaube*, which may be rendered as “faith” or “belief,” namely, **leubh-*, or “to praise,” and Szondi explains that the meaning is futuristic.¹³ Thus, faith as a projective spir-

¹⁰ Maria Egg-Benes and Louise Rossier-Benes, “Erinnerungen an die Familie Szondi,” *Sonderheft der Szondiana: Leopold Szondi zum 100. Geburtstag* 1993, 78.

¹¹ Leopold Szondi, “Glaube als Schicksal,” *Szondiana* 9 (1989): 53.

¹² *Ibid.*, 54.

¹³ Leopold Szondi, *Ich-Analyse* (Bern: Huber, 1956), 514.

itual participation looks forward to a state of joy, whose transcendence embraces both nature and spirit in a complementary whole.

Szondi expanded his theory of religion further in his two biblical studies. The first was a book on the Cain and Abel story (Genesis 4), in which he presents Cain as a symbol of evil, whose ego is driven by pent-up emotion and boundless greed.¹⁴ As a sequel to *Cain*, Szondi published a book on Moses. He admits with great difficulty that, as a Jew, he places Cain at the center of Moses's experience and tries to show empirically how killing leads through guilt to restitution, justice, and God.¹⁵ Szondi finds a close relationship between killing and religion, and one of the central tasks of faith is to resolve the former through the formation of conscience. Szondi's study of Moses establishes a second need for faith, that of making restitution or conscience, and this facilitates the primary need for a projective participation with God.

In summary, Szondi's personal experience and theory of faith arose in the contexts of his father's death, trench warfare, homelessness, persecution, and exile. These occurred as shock events, revealing dramatic patterns of irony and tragic reversal. Toward the end of his life, Szondi suffered two more shocks of terrible irony. His son Peter, professor of comparative literature at the Free University of Berlin, died by suicide in 1971. Even though he did not advocate his father's theories, Peter Szondi wrote about the profound themes of the Szondi family story. In his letters he refers to himself as a homeless person who lives in exile and who travels from place to place in search of a home.¹⁶ Apparently, his death was evidence of his inability to be at home after the Holocaust, particularly as a Jew in postwar Germany.

In 1978 Szondi's daughter Vera, a physician, died at home by uncertain natural causes.¹⁷ She had written a book on suicide in light of her brother's death.¹⁸ Just as his adult life began with grief work for his father, through the recitation of the kaddish, so it came to an end with deep, unresolved sorrow for his children. Szondi died on January

¹⁴ Leopold Szondi, *Kain: Gestalten des Bösen* (Bern: Huber, 1969), 8. See Szondi's classic profile of Adolf Eichmann as a psychopathic Cain-murderer, in connection with his 1961 trial in Jerusalem (62–67).

¹⁵ Leopold Szondi, *Moses: Antwort auf Kain* (Bern: Huber, 1973), 8. Szondi suggests that Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* reads like a novel and is historically untenable because it presumes two Moses figures (25–26).

¹⁶ Peter Szondi, *Briefe*, ed. C. König and T. Sparr (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1993), 82, 267. See also Martin Meyer, “. . . weil ich es verlernt habe, zu Hause zu sein . . .,” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, November 20–21, 1993.

¹⁷ Richard Hughes, “The Tragedy of the Szondis,” *Szondiana* 18 (1998): 38, 47–48.

¹⁸ Vera Szondi, *Selbstmord* (Bern: Huber, 1975).

24, 1986, without benefit of a kaddish said for him by his son, and Lili Szondi-Radvanyi died on August 18, 1986, after a short illness.

III. THE FAMILIAL UNCONSCIOUS

In this and the following two sections, I discuss the principal motifs of Szondi's theory of religion. The first reflects his concept of genotropism, which took shape in the 1930s on the basis of more than one thousand pedigree studies and fifteen thousand relatives. He inquired as to why married couples bore retarded, epileptic, and schizophrenic children. He proposed the idea of genotropism and defined it as the reciprocal attraction between carriers of the same or related latent recessive genes.¹⁹

He presented this concept at a conference in Geneva, Switzerland, in light of the Nazi sterilization policy in Germany. Szondi opposed the sterilization of carriers of recessive genes, because it would virtually destroy large segments of populations. He had calculated that, in a population of 10 million, 1.8 million would be carriers of psychiatric disorders inherited recessively.

Genotropism functions as the working principle of the familial unconscious (*das familiäre Unbewusste*), which appears in his major work on the family.²⁰ As indicated in the German term (*familiäre*), "familial" refers to "familiarity," which means the quantitative sharing of the genes across the generations of the family. Some members may inherit several genes from both parents and acquire the trait coded by these genes, while others might receive fewer genes and exhibit equivalents or spectrum conditions. For example, one sibling may suffer epilepsy, while the other has migraines, fits of rage, or intermittent outbursts of anger. The former would be homozygous for the trait, the latter a "single-dosage," heterozygous carrier of the genes for epilepsy.

The familial unconscious also works with a biological polarity. In a 1955 lecture on the "three languages of the unconscious," published posthumously, Szondi observed that whenever a family transmits genes for specific diseases, the same family transmits defenses against those disorders.²¹ Typically, the defenses take the form of corresponding vocational selections. For example, carriers of genes for schizophrenia

¹⁹ Leopold Szondi, "Heilpädagogik in der Prophylaxe der Nerven- und Geisteskrankheiten," *Sonderdruck aus dem Bericht über den 1. Internationalen Kongress für Heilpädagogik* 1939, 40.

²⁰ Leopold Szondi, *Schicksalsanalyse*, 4th ed. (Basel: Schwabe, 1987), 82, 122. Hereafter, the 4th ed. is cited.

²¹ Leopold Szondi, "Die Sprachen des Unbewussten: Symptom, Symbol, und Wahl," *Szondiana* 12 (1992): 23.

have an innate inclination toward psychiatry or related vocations requiring highly abstract thought.²² Since schizophrenic genes are deleterious, and schizophrenics tend not to marry, then the genetic trait must have a selective advantage in order to survive in populations. The vocational choices function as the evolutionary advantage. This function, known to Szondi and the older geneticists as “heterosis,” is currently called “balancing selection.”

Richard Dawkins introduced the idea of gene selection in his popular book *The Selfish Gene*, now regarded as “textbook orthodoxy.” He argued that the purpose of genes, as replicas of bits of DNA, is to make themselves more numerous in populations. A recessive gene can ensure its own survival by conferring its trait upon carriers and then conditioning them to be attracted to one another. Genes can recognize copies of themselves in others and motivate their carriers to fall in love, marry, and produce offspring bearing the same genetic traits.²³ Szondi already saw that, in times of war and revolution, families were separated, with the siblings raised apart from one another; then, many years later, these siblings would meet and fall in love.²⁴

The German biologist Wolfgang Wickler stated that Dawkins’s idea of gene selection was not new and that it had been introduced “by the Hungarian psychiatrist Leopold Szondi in 1937. . . . Well versed in genetics, Szondi . . . arrived at the theory of ‘Genotropism’ (1944), claiming that similar genes which by common descent come to inhabit different individuals induce, among other things, cooperation of those individuals.”²⁵

With the concept of familiarity, Szondi also anticipated the critique of Dawkins’s notion of the “selfish gene,” as currently argued by Holmes Rolston, who contends that genes survive because they are shared among kin and are not selfish.²⁶ Recessives are stored in populations, duplicated, and maintained heterozygously until environments become appropriate, and then they come into dominance. Recessives are resilient and wait for an environmental adaptation.

In his theory of religion Szondi amplified his genetics metaphorically. He suggested that totemism in tribal religions contained prescientific, symbolic insights into the transmission of recessive genes. Sigmund Freud had defined the totem as the “common ancestor” of the

²² Szondi, *Schicksalsanalyse*, 51.

²³ Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 95–97.

²⁴ Szondi, *Schicksalsanalyse*, 146–47.

²⁵ Wolfgang Wickler, “Pre-Wilsonian Sociobiology,” *Zeitschrift für Tierpsychologie* 49 (1979): 433.

²⁶ Holmes Rolston, *Genes, Genesis, and God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 68.

clan, and he said that the totem correlated with the incest taboo, defined as "a law against persons of the same totem having sexual relations with one another and consequently against their marrying."²⁷

Szondi pointed out that the incest taboo in tribal religion was unilateral. For example, in a matriarchy the mother and her children were considered "blood relatives" and descendants of the same totemic ancestor. While incest between them would be banned, it could occur between the daughter and the father or son and the father's sister, since the father was not "blood related." The sexual desire inherent in these incestuous possibilities would exemplify a hidden attraction based upon a common sharing of latent recessive genes.²⁸

Szondi distinguished, further, between blood relatives and gene relatives. Modern civilized societies ban incest between blood relatives in terms of a bilateral taboo. The concept of genotropism, however, identifies carriers of the same or similar recessive genes as gene relatives, and they are attracted to one another along the lines of the unilateral taboo in tribal religion. Hence, genotropic marriages are genetically incestuous.

Similarly, Szondi interpreted ancient transmigration doctrines in terms of the familial unconscious. In his *Moses*, he cites a medieval kabbalah text stating that Moses was a transmigrated form of Abel.²⁹ When Abel brought his offering to God (Gen. 4:4), he tried to look into the face of God, which was forbidden. Therefore, Cain struck down Abel for his sin, and to expiate the sin, the soul of Abel had to transmigrate for three lifetimes, until becoming purified as Moses. Likewise, the soul of Cain transmigrated into Jethro, Moses's father-in-law and a Midianite priest (Exod. 3:1).

Even though Szondi was not a kabbalist, he thought that the story symbolized the unconscious flow of recessive genes through three generations of kinship groups, until their traits became dominant. In the same familial transmission the soul of the good person defends against the soul of the evil person in a symbolic heterosis or balancing selection. Consequently, the mythic Cain and Abel are not "pure blood" homozygous figures, neither purely evil nor purely good, but they are morally mixed or heterozygous carriers of both good and evil tendencies. In every Cain there is an Abel and in every Abel a Cain. By analogy, all humans are morally heterozygous, and these traits are stored,

²⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (London: Hogarth, 1957), 24.

²⁸ Leopold Szondi, "Contributions to 'Fate Analysis': An Attempt at a Theory of Choice in Love," *Acta Psychologica* 3 (1937): 67, and *Ich-Analyse*, 226.

²⁹ Szondi, *Moses*, 150. The English translation is in Gershom Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, ed. J. Chipman, trans. J. Neugroschel (New York: Schocken, 1991), 213.

duplicated, and transmitted unconsciously and recessively until they emerge under favorable environmental conditions as moral tendencies in human experience.

IV. THE CAIN-MOSES POLARITY

In a 1971 dialogue with a Dutch neurologist, Szondi explains that he does not speak of good and evil, as such, but of evil and the just.³⁰ Evil has two aspects. One is the buildup and release of crude affects against a target, and the other is a movement toward restitution in the future. The future change in the sense of restitution or restoration is the meaning of the good. All evildoers seek God in the future, and in the Bible these dynamics are expressed by the mythic Cain and the historical Moses, respectively.

Szondi acknowledges that the Hebrew root of Cain is *kana*, which means "created by God" or "acquired through a purchase" and that the root derives from the Kenite tribe, which claimed Cain as its ancestor in ancient Israel.³¹ From the church fathers, Szondi amplifies the name of Cain further to mean the "son of wrath" (Tertullian), as well as "jealousy," "envy," and "violent bodily movements" (Eusebius, Clement). Elsewhere, I have explained that the church fathers considered Cain an epileptic, but Szondi failed to make that connection explicit.³² From the Haggadah, Szondi finds that Cain and Abel are married to their twin-sisters, as an exception to the incest taboo conferred by divine grace.

After God's rejection of his offering (Gen. 4:5), Cain seethes with anger. Szondi examines several haggadic and rabbinic commentaries and deduces a composite set of crude affects: anger and rage, envy and jealousy, hatred and vengeance. These are the "Cain emotions," released in acts of evil, and in pre-Kantian classical philosophy they comprise the irascible.³³ Through a convulsive discharge of these pent-up emotions, Cain murders his brother, seeking to vindicate himself in the face of God.

Citing Jewish, Christian, and Islamic commentaries, Szondi says that the monotheistic religions recognize a universal need to kill the brother. Everyone is capable of fratricide, and historically, therefore, Cain rules the world. Szondi's Cain is like that of St. Augustine, the

³⁰ Cornelis van Rhyn, "Gespräch mit Leopold Szondi," *Szondiana* 18 (1998): 64.

³¹ Szondi, *Kain*, 23.

³² See my *Cain's Lament: A Christian Moral Psychology* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 182–93.

³³ Szondi, *Kain*, 35. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Pts. 1–2, Quest. 23, Arts. 1–3.

founder of the earthly city who slew his brother Abel out of envy.³⁴ The need to kill the brother, in order to vindicate oneself before "God the Father," is the Cain complex, and it stands at the center of monotheism. The monotheistic religions cannot be interpreted psychoanalytically, whereby evil originates in a primal patricide in accord with the Oedipus complex, because in the Bible the father is not the enemy. Nearly every biblical figure has a brother or sister, and the struggle between siblings is a decisive factor in the narrative succession of the generations.³⁵

After the murder, God asks about Abel, but Cain replies deceptively: "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9b). Cain, cursed by his deed, faces an unknown future and fears he will be killed, but God declares: "Not so!" God places a sign on Cain, which Szondi interprets as an ethical imperative against any more killing. He accepts the haggadic image of the sign as a horn on the forehead and believes the sign is sacred due to its usage in the ordination of the priesthood (Exod. 27:2, 29:12) and to the Judaic tradition of the horned Moses.³⁶

Cain enters exile, fathers a son Enoch, builds the first city, and names it after his son (Gen. 4:17). Building the first city is a vocational decision that socializes the innate homicidal tendency and shapes civilization as the arena of fratricide. The genealogy of Cain's descendants, known as the Cainites (Gen. 4:18), reveals the return of the killing intent in Lamech of the seventh generation. Szondi reviews the legend of Lamech, the blind hunter who inadvertently kills what he thinks is a horned animal in the distance, but which turns out to be the horned Cain. Generally, Jewish exegetes interpret the sign of Cain as a protection lasting through seven generations (Gen. 4:15). Szondi prefers this view of the death of Cain, because it illustrates the fact that paroxysmal-epileptoid persons are vulnerable to sudden death by accidents and that the homicidal intent is transmitted unconsciously and recessively through the generations, until it becomes dominant.

In his commentary on Moses, Szondi examines Moses's birth in light of the ancient Near Eastern legends of miracle births and interprets these to mean that Moses is portrayed, via projection, as a heroic and

³⁴ Augustine, *City of God*, 15.5 (trans. P. Levine, Loeb Classical Library 414 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966], 429).

³⁵ Frederick Greenspahn, *When Brothers Dwell Together* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3–5.

³⁶ Szondi, *Kain*, 36. Szondi does not cite a specific source of the horned Moses, but the title page of his book has a picture of the horned Moses receiving the Torah, which compares to medieval portrayals. See the discussion of these issues in Ruth Mellinkoff, *The Horned Moses in Medieval Art and Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), and *The Mark of Cain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

just man. Nevertheless, despite Moses's deliverance from the water (Exod. 2:10) and upbringing in the house of pharaoh, the story actually begins when Moses slays the Egyptian for beating up a Hebrew and then secretly hides the body in the sand (Exod. 2:12). Moses kills out of righteous rage, and his burying the corpse signifies his guilt and moral anxiety. At issue is the recognition, by ancient peoples, that a religious founder has discharged the gross affects and violence of a "Cain personality."

When the murder becomes known, Moses flees in fear to the desert, joins Jethro and the Midianites, and works as a shepherd in the tradition of Abel. In the episode of the burning bush, Moses has an auditory vision of Yahweh and hides his face because he is afraid to look at God (Exod. 3:6). In light of the kabbalah text, cited by Szondi to symbolize the recurrence of recessive genes, Moses's fear of looking at God is an unconscious recollection of his former life as Abel, when he was slain for attempting to see God.

Yahweh commissions Moses to liberate the Hebrews from captivity in Egypt, but Moses reacts with a series of evasions, particularly with the claim that he is "slow of speech and slow of tongue" (Exod. 4:10). Szondi interprets this to mean stuttering, which, as an "attack sickness," functions as an equivalent of epilepsy. Moses's stuttering identifies him as a turbulent paroxysmal personality, or *Anfallsmensch*. The central question, posed by Szondi, is why God chooses a stutterer, a visionary, and a murderer as his prophet. He answers that in the biblical tradition a lawgiver is close to a lawbreaker.³⁷ Moses is permanently changed by his killing the Egyptian and, driven by guilt and moral anxiety, he seeks God to make restitution and achieve justice.

The structure of justice will be established in the Exodus, as Moses struggles against pharaoh through the ten plagues. Szondi interprets these as surcharged natural phenomena, experienced as shock events within the projective-participatory acts of corporate faith. The climax arrives in the tenth plague, the night of terror, as Yahweh passes over Egypt, striking down the Egyptian firstborn. God does not actually kill, but through their collective faith the people project their "Cain homicidal intent" onto God for vindication.

After the Exodus, Moses returns to Mt. Sinai and receives the Torah. The sixth commandment states: "You shall not murder" (Exod. 20:13), forbidding the Cain homicidal intent. Despite the promulgation of the commandment, however, Moses's paroxysmal-epileptoid nature neither recedes nor changes. For example, in the episodes of the golden calf

³⁷ Szondi, *Moses*, 79.

(Exodus 32) and the wandering in the wilderness (Numbers 14), Moses faces rebellions and orders the destruction of the rebels, who are brothers, friends, and relatives, in divinely sanctioned killing. Psychologically, therefore, Moses transfers his "Cain unconscious" (*kainitische Urgrund*) onto God and creates a projective-participatory union, which establishes the structure of justice through the law. Szondi summarizes Mosaic faith with a Talmudic saying of the Hasidic Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav: "One can serve God with the evil drive, when one directs one's violent and covetous passion to God, and without the evil drive there is no perfect service."³⁸

Moses fulfills the need for faith in an unbroken spiritual bond with God that is so intense as to exclude other gods. Here is the psychological origin of monotheism; but in the absence of the definition given by Szondi, I understand it to mean the affirmation of the one transcendent God and the rejection of other gods.³⁹ The rejection of other gods raises the Cain homicidal intent to an ultimate level that, if not integrated in a projective participation with God, becomes holy terrorism.

V. THE PONTIFICAL EGO

In his *Moses*, Szondi discusses crossing a bridge between killing and faith, or Cain and Moses, and states that the human task is to construct a bridge between the two, even though the crossing may require a superhuman effort. Recognition of guilt and conscience provides the means for spanning killing and faith, and only one who has made restitution can actually cross the bridge.⁴⁰ I believe that this idea reflects the influence of Hasidic Judaism, since Rabbi Nachman also spoke of the bridge: "The entire world is a very narrow bridge; the main thing is to have no fear."⁴¹

The ego stands at the center of religious experience and is symbolized by the bridge. Szondi interprets the ego as a "bridge-builder" or span that embraces all mental antitheses, a pontifical union of the opposites. The term "pontifical" derives from two Latin words—*pons*, which means "bridge" or "way," and *facere*, "to make." Hence, the pontifical ego (*Pontifex Ich*) represents a transpersonal state of being

³⁸ Ibid., 120.

³⁹ Raffaele Pettazzoni, "La Formation du Monothéisme," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 88 (1923): 196.

⁴⁰ Szondi, *Moses*, 9, 118.

⁴¹ Cited in Eliezer Witztum, David Greenberg, and Jacob T. Buchbinder, "A Very Narrow Bridge," *Psychotherapy* 27 (1990): 125.

achieved with the participatory faith function. The pontifical ego goes beyond the bodily ego but remains grounded in the biological needs of the organism, including the genes and familial unconscious; and this is why Szondi prefers the term ego (*Ich*) to that for self (*Selbst*).

The pontifical ego has two biographical sources. Magda Kerenyi reports that Szondi's bridge symbol was modeled after the chain bridge spanning the Danube River in Budapest.⁴² In the view of one scholar, the dynamics of the pontifical ego arose in the concentration camp, when Lili Szondi-Radvanyi contemplated a better world without falling into a delusion.⁴³ Both reports imply that for Szondi the bridge symbol provided a transcendent unifying principle of meaning during his years of homelessness, persecution, and exile.

As attested by his Zurich research assistant, Szondi's primary intellectual source of the pontifical ego was the Hindu mystical tradition of the Upanishads.⁴⁴ Szondi quotes several passages from the Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad, and with one (1.4.1) he clarifies the origin of the pontifical ego as a primal reality: "In the beginning was this world alone an ego in the form of a man. It looked around itself, and it saw nothing other than itself. Thereupon it cried out at the beginning: It is I. From this originated the name I."⁴⁵ Szondi uses Paul Deussen's translation and Heinrich Gomperz's commentary, the former translating *atman* as *Selbst* and the latter as *Ich*.

In Szondi's reading of the Upanishads, the pontifical ego is like *atman*, and he describes it in terms of the "negative theology," or *neti, neti*: "The pontifical ego is neither almighty God nor helpless humanity but the bond between God and humanity. . . . Neither spirit nor nature but the bridge between spirit and nature. . . . Neither waking nor dreaming but the bridge between waking and dreaming."⁴⁶ The pontifical ego transcends the ordinary realm of metrical space, linear time, and causality—even the body and the ancestral images—all of which comprise immanent consciousness. Surpassing the latter occurs ecstatically in shock events and reveals the psychological phases of participation, transcendence, and integration.

In cases of psychopathology, the ego expands as an end in itself, boundlessly, and without authentic relatedness or spirituality. This would be a paranoid delusion, the opposite of the pontifical ego, and

⁴² Magda Kerenyi, "Erinnerungen an die Familie Szondi: Interview von Karl Bürgi-Meyer," *Szondiana* 14 (1994): 44.

⁴³ Beatrice Kronenberg, "Szondi, die Schicksalsanalyse und des Jüdische," *Sonderheft der Szondiana: Leopold Szondi zum 100. Geburtstag* 1993, 83.

⁴⁴ Karl Bürgi-Meyer, "Die Lehre vom Pontifex-Ich," *Szondiana* 8 (1988): 12.

⁴⁵ Szondi, *Ich-Analyse*, 114.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 156.

is compared by Szondi to the Hindu notion of the *ahamkara*. Similarly, an introjective delusion, a narcissistic desire to possess everything, corresponds to the Hindu *maha-atman*. An illusion is a substitute participation in social and metaphysical reality, a failure to achieve genuine relatedness, and an active belief state rather than an error.

The bridge between the transcendent and immanent dimensions of consciousness includes not only the unification of all subject-object antitheses but also that of the Cain and Moses tendencies. The union of the Cain and the Moses manifests conscience, and generally Szondi defines it as the restitution of the Cain intent. This definition grows out of the recognition of guilt as one function of the need for restitution. In his *Moses*, Szondi acknowledges that biblical Hebrew lacks an explicit term for conscience but that the Bible represents its meaning through the imagery of the inner life, particularly in the Wisdom literature (e.g., Psalms 139) and medieval Judaism through the metaphor of the heart. Psychologically, conscience is an introjection of the voice of God, and it comprises four components: (1) a need for moral value, which includes a capacity for personal renunciation; (2) a need for restitution, based upon the prohibition against murder; (3) critical reality testing by the bodily ego as a responsible moral agent; and (4) the exalted projective-participatory power of being in the pontifical ego.⁴⁷ Altogether, these four functions are the same as the basic needs for faith.

VI. A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

In a lecture in Zurich, commemorating the centennial of Szondi's birth, I explained that every religion in the world has the bridge symbol.⁴⁸ Not only does the bridge inform myth and symbol, but it also appears in dreams. The bridge is a multiple-meaning idea; therefore, Szondi's decision to place it at the center of religious experience invites a critical examination of his theory.

A. *The Bridge*

As stated above, Szondi conceptualized the pontifical ego in light of the Upanishads, and it is certainly true that the bridge symbolizes the *brahman-atman* relation in specific texts (Brihadaranyaka 4.4.22; Chandogya 8.4.1; Mundaka 2.2.5; Svetasvatara 6.19; Katha 3.2). Szondi

⁴⁷ Szondi, *Moses*, 152–53.

⁴⁸ Richard Hughes, "The Symbolism of the Bridge," *Szondiana* 13 (1993): 46–58.

worked with the view of *atman* as the essential human identity and oneness with the creative, divine, and primal power of the universe, in order to clarify the universal and nondifferentiated ground of the psyche.⁴⁹ The problem is that the *brahman-atman* identity, particularly in Vedanta, entails a monism, which conflicts with Szondi's commitment to a dialectical and relational metaphysics.

Curiously, Szondi neglected the Chinvat bridge, which originated in the pre-Zoroastrian period of Persian religion and evolved into Zoroastrianism. The Chinvat bridge spans this world and the next and is explicitly linked to conscience (*daena*), which is activated in all persons at initiation.⁵⁰ In the crossing at death, the Chinvat bridge becomes wide for the righteous and narrow for the wicked. The soul of the deceased righteous is met by an attractive fifteen-year-old being of the opposite sex and that of the wicked by an unattractive fifteen-year-old being of the opposite sex. These beings represent one's conscience, as shaped by a good or evil destiny, respectively, after one's initiation at age fifteen.

I believe that the Chinvat bridge fits Szondi's theory of religion more precisely than the Hindu bridge, because the latter lacks a clear ethical conception of conscience. By recognizing the historical primacy of the Chinvat bridge, therefore, we may relocate the origins of the pontifical ego in the broad Indo-Persian heritage between 5000 and 2000 BCE.⁵¹ Consequently, we may understand Szondi's pontifical ego as historically conditioned and as a major archetypal form within the monotheistic religions. Some specific symbolic variations would be that of the al-Sirat bridge in Islamic eschatology; the Christian test bridge, beginning with the classical form of Gregory the Great (*Diag.* 4.37); and the penitential bridge of the Latin vision literature.⁵² In the Latin tradition, the "bridge builder" (*Pontifex*) was the one who made a way to God, defending against dangers along the way.⁵³

⁴⁹ Būrgi-Meyer, "Die Lehre vom Pontifex-Ich," 15.

⁵⁰ M. Molé, "Daena, le pont Cinvat et l'initiation dans le Mazdéisme," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 157 (1960): 156–58.

⁵¹ Mary Boyce, ed. and trans., *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 8.

⁵² See Howard Patch, *The Other World* (New York: Octagon, 1980), 8–9, 15–16, 95–97. In *Schicksalsanalyse*, Szondi points out that Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1927) expresses his psychology precisely (214).

⁵³ C. J. Bleeker, "Die Religiöse Bedeutung der Brücke," in *The Sacred Bridge* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 184.

B. Cain and Moses

In Szondi's theory Moses is the "bridge builder" who synthesizes Cain and Abel or the evil and just impulses, respectively, of Rabbinic Judaism. The Cain-Moses polarity is, admittedly, speculative, but it corresponds to a similar view in Philo, who links Cain with evil and Moses with justice in the search for God as a transcendent being.⁵⁴ Szondi's notion of faith as a "royal road" to humanization, which includes the Cain-Moses union, also reflects Philo's motif of the "royal road" as a path toward wholeness with God.⁵⁵ While Szondi's sources are eclectic, his theory reflects primarily the traditions of Philo and Hellenistic Judaism, but with one exception. Philo points out that the Bible does not explicitly say that Cain died, but it implies that he lives forever in exile. In contrast, Szondi favors the view that Cain is murdered by Lamech, in accord with paroxysmal family tragedy and the return of the evil impulse through the generations.

The Cain-Moses polarity also symbolizes the psychiatric aspects of epilepsy, a neglected area of psychiatry that Szondi has clarified conclusively.⁵⁶ Cain represents a buildup of hostile affects and convulsive discharge, and Moses a hyperethical and hyperreligious search for restitution. This threefold sequence of (1) pent-up emotion, such as irritability, anger, and fury; (2) convulsive attack; and (3) need for restitution activates an instinctually driven (*Trieb*), paroxysmal-epileptoid pattern in human nature. Everyone inherits a capacity to be startled, as confirmed by electroconvulsive treatment, but it becomes manifest especially in those religious figures who face danger and try to reverse or resolve it. Consequently, they become vulnerable to the hereditary "attack sickness," whether epilepsy, migraines, stuttering, fits of homicidal rage, angry outbursts, or spiritual ecstasy. Paroxysmal-epileptoid persons are alternately angry and just.

Typically, the paroxysmal-epileptoid personality manifests the Cain

⁵⁴ Philo, *On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile*, 4.12, 5.16 (in *Philo*, Vol. II, trans. F. Colson and G. Whitaker, Loeb Classical Library 227 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958]). In paragraph 169 of the same work, Philo presents the "negative theology."

⁵⁵ Philo, *On the Giants*, 14.64, in Colson and Whitaker, *Philo*. Szondi may have paraphrased Freud's famous remark about dreams as the "royal road" to the unconscious, but the idea appeared earlier with Philo.

⁵⁶ For a clinical confirmation of Szondi's understanding of epilepsy, see Dietrich Blumer, "Dysphoric Disorders and Paroxysmal Affects," *Harvard Review of Psychiatry* 8 (2000): 10, 15, and "The Biological Basis of Hysteria and Its Polarity to Epilepsy," *Szondiana* 5 (2005): 19. In a letter to the author (December 8, 1978), Szondi clarified the genetic basis of this idea: "The Cain-Moses polarity with respect to religion has been my favorite theme for a long time. (No wonder: I have two nephews and one niece who are epileptic.)"

complex psychosomatically (e.g., hypertension) or by moral conflicts, which reenact historical patterns of fratricide. The psychoanalytic scholar Yosef Yerushalmi has acknowledged the Cain complex and admitted that Freud neglected it.⁵⁷ He interprets early Christianity in terms of the Cain complex and states that Christian fratricidal guilt has been repressed and denied. This presumes that Christianity was a religion of the younger brother, which displaced Judaism as that of the elder brother.

The psychoanalytic argument overlooks the fact that Paul's "Cain complex" is neither repressed nor denied but clearly expressed in his epistles (Gal. 1:13–14, Phil. 3:5–6, 1 Cor. 15:9).⁵⁸ The New Testament does not define Jesus as the younger brother but as the firstborn among his siblings (Luke 2:23, Mark 6:3, Rom. 8:29). The New Testament also interprets Cain as a figure of evil (John 8:44, 1 John 3:12, Jude 11) and Abel as the righteous one whose sacrificial death prefigured the martyrdom of Jesus (Matt. 23:35, Heb. 11:4, 12:24). Thus, the New Testament moved away from the Hebrew Bible by defining Cain as evil and Abel as good and by making Cain's slaying of Abel a foundation sacrifice.

C. *The Unconscious*

In 1956 Szondi set out to unify the schools of depth psychology with his tripartite model of the unconscious. The task of depth psychology is to know the "unknowable" unconscious, and this knowledge requires three languages.⁵⁹

The first is that of the symptom, as derived from the repression of an early childhood trauma in the Freudian personal unconscious, and it informs psychoanalytic interpretations of archaic traditions as a "return of the repressed." Szondi accepted the fact that deeply shuddering experiences could return as memory traces in the ego, but he argued that traumas became neuroses only by gene selection in the family.⁶⁰

The second is that of the symbol, which erupts from the archetypes of the Jungian collective unconscious; in Szondi's experience, symbols return mainly in dreams. In an early lecture, Jung pointed out that

⁵⁷ Yosef Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 92. I introduced Szondi's theory into psychoanalysis with my essay "Szondi's Theory of the Cain Complex," *American Imago* 36 (1979): 260–74.

⁵⁸ See my essay "The Cain Complex and the Apostle Paul," *Soundings* 65 (1982): 5–22.

⁵⁹ Szondi, *Ich-Analyse*, 61.

⁶⁰ Szondi, *Moses*, 36–37, and *Schicksalsanalyse*, 58.

ancestral traits become buried in the unconscious and are passed down the generations as "Mendelian units."⁶¹ Later, in his autobiography he refers to such traits as an "impersonal karma within a family," and he explains "that I had to answer questions which fate had posed to my forefathers, and which had not yet been answered."⁶² His personal reflections were those of the familial unconscious, which he failed to differentiate clearly from the personal and collective dimensions.

The third is the language of choice, specifically, the selection of existential possibilities inherited from the familial unconscious. Genetic traits confer needs and tendencies that shape decision making. Genetic tendencies may be decoded by constructing genealogies, indicating recurrent patterns of marriage, friendship, and vocational choices in relation to types of illness and modes of death. Destiny comprises all of the hereditary tendencies in the familial unconscious, which we express primarily through marriage and vocational selections.

Freud interpreted existential decision making in terms of the Oedipus complex and, in his 1937 letter to Szondi, published posthumously, insisted that such decisions were narcissistic and anaclitic.⁶³ While Szondi accepted the Oedipus complex, he found that it existed only under the following conditions: when the mother sees her father or brother represented in her son, or when the father sees his mother or sister in his daughter.⁶⁴ Hence, the son takes after the maternal grandfather or uncle, and the daughter takes after the paternal grandmother or aunt.

Familial decision making reflects the sharing of genetic traits across at least three generations. Szondi presents the case of a Protestant pastor who has an epileptic daughter. She marries a "Cain personality" and gives birth to two sons, who become theologians like their grandfather.⁶⁵ This was an early Budapest case, by which Szondi argued against sterilizing epileptics, since they produced theologians. The case illustrates the fact that in paroxysmal families, whose members carry epileptic genes, religious professions serve as both defenses and constructive social outlets and that decision making reveals a rhythmic flow pattern of "Cain" and "Moses" tendencies across the generations.

⁶¹ C. G. Jung, *Analytical Psychology*, ed. W. McGuire (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 37.

⁶² C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, trans. Richard Winston and Clara Winston (New York: Random House, 1961), 233.

⁶³ Leopold Szondi, *Freiheit und Zwang im Schicksal des Einzelnen* (Bern: Huber, 1968), 57.

⁶⁴ Szondi, *Schicksalsanalyse*, 149–50.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 273. Statistical percentages of epilepsy and its equivalents in clergy families are presented on 436.

VII. CONCLUSION

Szondi's analysis of destiny is a systematic psychiatry, containing a religious depth psychology with an epic scope. This type of psychology, known in Europe as *Seelenkunde*, narrates the unfolding of the psyche throughout the generations of the family, from the absolute freedom of the unconscious (*Urgrund*) to the relative freedom of humanization in the faith function. Only persons who have resolved the Cain complex are able to say that destiny guides their lives and that they have become truly free.⁶⁶ This epic psychology is governed by the vision of the "return of the ancestor," and it means that hereditary patterns may erupt in our lives as shock events, even many years after the cessation of conventional therapy.

While grounded in Hellenistic and Hasidic Judaism, Szondi's psychology contains a creative dialogue with the religions of the world, particularly Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. This dialogue was facilitated by his working with the "negative theology," and his conception of faith as a need for spiritual participation grew out of his interests in the mystical traditions. Within the monotheistic religions the founder bears a close relationship with the problem of killing and the figure of Cain. Therefore, a central task of monotheism is to make restitution for the Cain homicidal intent and to promote restorative justice. This occurs with the pontifical ego, as the religious leader becomes a bridge in order to lead the way from Cain to Moses.

⁶⁶ Leopold Szondi, letter to the author, September 26, 1979.

Review Article

The Fate of Political Theology: Reflections on Shmuel Feiner's "The Jewish Enlightenment"*

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I. INTRODUCTION: THE EUROPEAN ENLIGHTENMENT AND THE *HASKALAH*

Previously the Enlightenment was defined as a unified and homogeneous movement. Recent scholarship, by contrast, has emphasized a diversity of Enlightenments.¹ Much attention has been paid to differences in cultural and national outlook. There have thus emerged studies dedicated to the English, French, Italian, and German Enlightenments.² The Jewish Enlightenment, known as *Haskalah*, has been extensively studied. There exists a wide range of monographs on the *Haskalah*, which had its origins in late eighteenth-century Prussia but quickly spread to the Russian and Austrian-Hungarian empires and elsewhere in Europe.³ What distinguishes Shmuel Feiner's *The Jewish Enlightenment* (first published in Hebrew in 2002 and titled *Ma 'apechat ha-neorut, tenuat ha Haskalah ha-Yehudit ba-mea ha-shmune esre*) is that it is the most comprehensive study of the German *Haskalah*. By paying particular attention to the often neglected corpus of Jewish Enlighten-

* Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, trans. Chaya Naor (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

[†] I am most grateful to the outside readers and editors for their comments and criticism, which helped improve the quality of this review article.

¹ See Jonathan I. Israel's *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Michael Mack's *German Idealism and the Jew: The Inner Anti-Semitism of Philosophy and German Jewish Responses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

² Compare Roy Porter and Mark Teich, eds., *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

³ In the past decade a number of important studies appeared. See Janine Strauss's *La Haskala: Les débuts de la littérature hébraïque moderne* (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1991); David Sorkin's *Moses Mendelssohn and the Religious Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Jeremy Dauber's *Antonio's Devils: Writers of the Jewish Enlightenment and the Birth of Modern Hebrew and Yiddish Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); and Moshe Pelli's *In Search of Genre: Hebrew Enlightenment and Modernity* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005).

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ment texts composed in Hebrew, he fills a mayor gap in Enlightenment studies.

The Jewish Enlightenment marks a striking confrontation with modernity, which came with a bang but not without a whimper.⁴ It intellectually and spiritually accompanied the socioeconomic move “out of the ghetto” that reshaped the outlook of Western Jewish civilization from the mid-seventeenth century until toward the end of the nineteenth century.⁵ While it is true to say that there were powerful external reasons for Jewish emancipation—most notably economic reasons that argued about making the Jews “useful” for the emerging market economies of a growing bourgeois society—Feiner focuses on the hitherto neglected internal call for a reform of Jewish culture. These inner-Jewish debates were, however, driven by the externality of the non-Jewish world.

In this way, Weiner pays particular attention to a sense of intellectual inferiority among European Ashkenazi intellectuals in the middle of the eighteenth century: “They [young men in European Ashkenazi society] were motivated by a sense of intellectual inferiority, as well as by the strong desire to partake of the domains of knowledge of a cultural renaissance—the redemption of science and philosophy—the entrance to which had been denied them by those holding the keys to the traditional library.”⁶ While the self-perception of intellectual inferiority may very well result from a strong external stimulus, the critique of those guarding the doors that would grant access to libraries has a strenuous antihierarchical tendency, which seeks to reform social imbalances within the inner sphere of traditional Jewish society. This anti-hierarchical trend first of all targets the rabbinic elite. Weiner traces the way in which a secular intelligentsia struggled to take over the authoritative stance that had traditionally been reserved for the religious establishment. The *Haskalah* was thus not only a social movement for greater equality of access to the sources of learning but also constituted an attempt to set up a new library, which no longer focused on the study of Talmudic texts. But this was not all. It also encompassed the work of secular authors: “The internal Jewish public debate now left the Torah study halls, synagogues, community council meetings, rabbinical responses, books of ethics and sermons, and moved into the multilingual periodicals, literary clubs, the republic of letters, and pri-

⁴ Compare Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁵ Compare Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770–1870* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998).

⁶ Weiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, xi.

vate homes. One of the results of this process was the creation of a new Jewish library. The religious establishment's monopoly on knowledge was broken and so too was its monopoly on the guidance of the community, on criticism and moral preaching, on education, and even on the most intimate aspect of life—dress, manners, family.”⁷ The Jewish Enlightenment was thus not only a self-enclosed academic undertaking. It had larger aims. The young Jewish men who joined the *Haskalah* set out to reshape the social strata of society in the mid-eighteenth century.

Where can we locate the intellectual point of departure for this radical critique of both religious and political hierarchies? In his new book Feiner refers to the deism of John Toland and Voltaire. In contrast to Toland, who argued for the integration of Jews into mainstream society as British citizens, Voltaire represented Judaism as morally inferior. This demeaning depiction of Judaism thus replaced traditional Christian supersessionism. The charge of moral inferiority as well as logical/philosophical absurdity carried, however, a more deleterious sting with it than the theological argument of the church fathers. While traditional theology proclaimed Christianity as the triumphant faith, it nevertheless reaffirmed the validity of Jewish existence as witness to both the superseding religion of Jesus Christ and to the incompleteness of redemption (only in a redeemed world, “at the end of days,” would the Jews realize the supremacy of that religion that superseded their own). Moreover, most of the church fathers were keenly aware of Christianity's reliance on Judaism.

A philosophe like Voltaire, by contrast, attempted to do away with both the New and the Old Testaments. To be sure, his pronouncements against the latter were more vituperative than his more subdued discussions about the former. This difference in tone derives, however, from Voltaire's guardedness vis-à-vis any possible offense he might cause to the Christian establishment of his time. Yet in an unacknowledged but nevertheless forceful manner, the new philosophical ideal of a perfect moral community eclectically translated core paradigms of some elements within traditional Christian belief into the secularized language that shaped political and moral philosophy. In a similar vein, Kant proclaimed Christ's death on the cross as the exclusive symbol of moral actions within an ethical body politic. Those acting according to the categorical imperative, Kant argued, have “to die to everything that holds them fettered to earthly life to the detriment of morality.”⁸

⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, ed. and trans. Allen W. Wood and George Di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 121.

Belief in Christ did, of course, no longer matter for Kant. What mattered, however, was the internalization of an eclectic understanding of Christian morality. Kant interpreted this moral and rational element within Christianity as the exact opposite of Judaism, which he defined as a “religion without religion,” in short, as will to power over “the goods of this world.”⁹

As has been mentioned above, the church fathers believed that Christianity superseded Judaism, but they still reaffirmed the dependence of the former on the latter. An influential strand within mainstream Enlightenment philosophy, by contrast, denied any reliance by the New on the Old Testament. Voltaire seems to have wanted to do away with both testaments. Kant, however, attempted to build a modern body politic around what he perceived to be the moral and rational kernel of Christian truth. In *Jerusalem: Or on Religious Power and Judaism* (1783), Moses Mendelssohn took issue with this Kantian attempt to sever the connecting links between Christianity and Judaism. “Now Christianity,” he admonishes his readers, “as you know, is built upon Judaism, and if the latter falls, it must necessarily collapse with it into *one* heap of ruins.”¹⁰ Mendelssohn, as the best-known Jewish Enlightenment philosopher, thus articulated the difficulty that the *Haskalah* faced in its attempt to become congruent with a Kantian philosophy of modernity.

A *maskil* like Mendelssohn did not attempt to undermine the religious foundations of Judaism. As Feiner brilliantly shows, leading representatives of the *Haskalah* tried to find a middle way between modernity and traditional Judaism. This quest for a third path was meant to strengthen rather than weaken the religious life of Jews within the modern era. Jewish Enlightenment philosophers were thus squarely at odds with both Voltaire and Kant. They equally rejected Voltaire’s hostility toward religion and Kant’s focus on an eclectic reading of Christianity, which served as the paradigmatic foundation of modernity. In pinpointing the intellectual point of departure for an antihierarchical confrontation between reason and religious truth one has thus to look at the philosophical revolution that took place in the mid-seventeenth century. Feiner does not discuss Spinoza’s seventeenth-century philosophy as a theoretical blueprint of the eighteenth-century *Haskalah*, even

⁹ For a detailed discussion of how Kant’s moral and political philosophy focuses on an eclectic moral understanding of Christianity as secularized rationality and how Kant defines modern reason in opposition to the “Jewish,” see Mack, *German Idealism and the Jew*, 23–41.

¹⁰ Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem: Or on Religious Power and Judaism*, trans. Allan Arkush, intro. and commentary by Alexander Altmann (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1983), 87.

though he acknowledges the radical force of heretic thinkers like Uriel D'Acosta. Like Spinoza, D'Acosta belonged to the Western Sephardic diaspora. The *herem* (ban) was pronounced on both of them:

Although rationalist criticism had already been leveled from within Jewry in the seventeenth century, it was confined to the Western Sephardic diaspora and to fascinating, but rather exceptional heterodox figures like the deist Uriel D'Acosta and the famous pantheist Baruch Spinoza, who questioned the divine authority of the Bible and criticized what to their minds were the superstitions in Jewish religion. But this threat posed by several audacious individuals, who did not form any movement or develop any ideology directed at the overall Jewish public with the aim of fundamentally changing it, was met by communities that generally succeeded in ousting deviants from their midst or silencing them with the threat of excommunication.¹¹

Feiner is right when he demarcates the difference between Spinoza, on the one hand, and Jewish Enlightenment philosophy, on the other: Spinoza certainly did not form a philosophical movement within the confines of a specific Jewish community (such as the Sephardic one in Amsterdam). Indeed, his excommunication made him intellectually and socially independent from any adherence to a religious tradition. As a recent study has, however, clearly shown, Spinoza shaped the intellectual constitution of different French, Swedish, Russian, German, Italian, and Polish Enlightenment traditions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹² The Jewish Enlightenment was certainly not an isolated phenomenon. Against this background, it is thus not surprising that the Jewish Enlightenment philosopher Moses Mendelssohn attempted to rehabilitate Spinoza not only within the context of the *Has-kalah* but also within the literary culture of Germany, in particular, and Europe, in general.

Moreover, the impact of Spinoza's revolutionary thought was not confined to the realm of biblical criticism alone. It had a much larger reach. Spinoza's revolution "overtly challenged the three principle pillars of medieval and early modern society—monarchy, aristocracy, and the Church—going some way to overturning all three."¹³ For an accurate discussion of the religious critique of theology as politics (as analyzed by Weiner in his fine account of the Jewish Enlightenment), it is therefore necessary to discuss Spinoza's ontological critique of all kinds of epistemological mediations (be they theological, economic, sociopolitical, or scientific). As the following brief discussion will show,

¹¹ Weiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, 7.

¹² See Israel's *Radical Enlightenment*, 436.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 714.

the inner Jewish critique of the rabbinic elite in terms of hierarchical politics rather than "true religion" cannot be fully understood without taking into account Spinoza's questioning of theology as political obfuscation, which serves to cover up social injustices. It is therefore worthwhile complementing Feiner's discussion with a brief analysis of the radical philosophy developed in the seventeenth century. It is this radical philosophy that made possible the Jewish Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.

II. SPINOZA'S CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL THEOLOGY

The middle of the seventeenth century witnessed the emergence of a new age. With Descartes' and then with Spinoza's critique of the Cartesian dualism between mind and body, modernity was in the process of being born. This new era introduced philosophy as the master discourse that would from then on increasingly shape the outlook of Western European society on an all-encompassing level. It would not only have an impact on academic matters but would also saliently contribute to new developments in divergent fields such as the applied sciences, economics, class, and gender relations. In short, from the mid-seventeenth century onward, philosophy dethroned theology as an intellectual tool for providing an ideological basis for critical inquiry into all kinds of areas within society in its entirety.

Whereas Descartes affirmed the validity of the established order in both political and theological matters (as he preeminently did at the opening of his *Meditation on the First Philosophy* [1641]), Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670) advocated the application of a scientific method to the study of biblical texts. In the *Ethics* (which was published posthumously in 1677) Spinoza would extend the geometric method (which he adopted from Descartes) from the field of biblical criticism to that of theology, anthropology, politics, and social analysis.

While emphasizing the distinction between philosophy, on the one hand, and theology as well as politics, on the other, Descartes' metaphorical description with which he characterizes the novelty of his philosophical approach nevertheless implies the totalizing potential of his undertaking. In what ways does his use of metaphor undercut Descartes' seemingly humble self-limitation of philosophy as a self-enclosed entity that pays its respect to the spiritual and worldly powers that be? In his *Discourse on Method* (1637), he compares his philosophical approach to the pulling down of an old house. A house, however, symbolizes a unified whole made up of particular entities. Descartes is thus at pains to emphasize that the abolition at work in his philosophy

does not threaten the theological foundations of the body politic. The house that he is in the process of tearing down, he avers, has nothing to do with the societal architectonics of both an absolutist monarchy as well as the Catholic Church's claim to infallible truth.

By the 1660s, however, Spinoza (no doubt spurred by his expulsion from the Jewish community in 1656) abandoned Descartes' differentiation between philosophical discovery and religious as well as social life. In order to improve the welfare of humanity, Spinoza argued, the philosopher cannot avoid addressing human issues in their entirety. He thus not only did away with the traditional philosophical as well as theological dualism between body and mind (which Descartes had inherited from Plato) but also with philosophy's self-restriction to a limited field where it acts as handmaiden to theological undertakings.

By arguing that the mind cannot fully control the life of the body, Spinoza in fact undermined the societal force of various ideologies that have their foundation in specific epistemological assumptions (be they theological, philosophical, scientific, or economic). In this way he opened the way for an understanding of humanity that does not force abstract standards upon the specific contexts of human minds and bodies. He not only differentiated theology from philosophy but also marked off philosophical strivings for and scientific claims to epistemological certainty from the inevitable uncertainties of embodied social life. Had he only driven a wedge between theology and philosophy, Spinoza would have been close to replacing the monolithic assumptions of the former with those of the latter. Instead, Spinoza questioned the validity of all kinds of human epistemologies, thus affirming the mind's lack of control over both the individual body and the body politic.

III. SPINOZA AND THE JEWISH ENLIGHTENMENT CRITIQUE OF THEOLOGY AS OBFUSCATED POLITICS

In what way did Spinoza's philosophical abolition of a hierarchy between mind and body serve as the motif force that drove the *Haskalah's* attempt to set itself apart from the hierarchical structure of the rabbinic elite? The Spinozist critique of various kinds of intellectual endeavors (not just those of "theology") resulted in a blurring of boundaries that demarcated the realm of sensuous enjoyment from that of cerebral work: "All these things [relating to both bodily enjoyment and cerebral work]," Spinoza argues, "indeed, show clearly that both the decision of the mind and the appetites and the determination of the body by nature exist together—or rather are one and the same thing,

which we call a decision when it is considered under, and explained through, the attribute of thought, and which we call determination when it is considered under the attribute of extension and deduced from the laws of motion and rest.”¹⁴ As a corollary Spinoza reveals “the decisions of the mind” as “nothing but the appetites themselves.”¹⁵ This reading together of the quest for knowledge with the quasi-libidinal drives helped to support the quasi-natural, namely, erotic character, which various Jewish Enlightenment philosophers attributed to the attraction of the study of external, that is, secular texts. In this way, Isaac Satanow, like other early *maskilim*, “employed erotic images to explain the intensity of his irrepressible passion for writing and printing.”¹⁶ Satanow thus drew an analogy between bodily pleasures and the life of the mind: “The Almighty created in man the passion for the two, to bring things to their appointed end, whether by sowing his seed and bringing forth progeny or planting the seeds of wisdom, which is a form of man.”¹⁷

Spinoza’s critique of both theology and concomitantly of religious authority had an even greater impact on the formation of a secular Jewish culture within the wake of the *Haskalah* in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Feiner convincingly discusses the way in which Mendelssohn and his followers presented their spiritual and intellectual undertakings not as belonging to the religious realm but rather to the sphere of artistic, namely, literary writing. As we have seen, Spinoza read what so far had been classified under the rubric “theology” as nothing else but politics. However, by substituting political theology for political philosophy, some of Spinoza’s Enlightenment heirs (as is most glaringly the case with Kant) uncritically succumbed exactly to what their mentor had criticized, namely, the epistemological distortion of material conditions that are not exclusively shaped by the mind but also by bodily desires and needs. When thus Lodowijk Meyer’s *Philosophia Sancta Scripturae Interpres* (1666) simply replaced a theological with a philosophical ideology, it remains doubtful in what way this undertaking distorted rather than followed Spinoza’s approach.

Yet a powerful strand of seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and to some extent nineteenth-century thought embarked on this distortion of what had been, after all, Spinoza’s most salient difference to Descartes: his critique of the mind’s omnipotence over the body. The repercussions

¹⁴ Spinoza, *Ethics*, ed. and trans. Edwin Curley, with an intro. by Stuart Hampshire (London: Penguin, 1996), 73.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, 246.

¹⁷ Ibid.

of these distortions have been discussed above in relation to Voltaire's teleology of history and his concomitant demotion of bygone ages (be they Jewish or Christian). In a different but related way, Kant twisted Spinoza's defense of secular culture in his single-minded attempt to secularize what he saw as the moral and rational kernel of Christian theology.

It is against this attempt to reintroduce hierarchy into the philosophical foundation of modernity that Jewish Enlightenment philosophers criticized not only the power politics of the rabbinic elite but also discriminatory and exclusionary tendencies within the non-Jewish culture of eighteenth-century Europe. Mendelssohn, as a response to Kant's political philosophy, thus formulated what I have called a counternarrative.¹⁸ Counternarratives question commonly held assumptions and creeds about everything's proper place in the world. What does it mean to write a counterhistory? It is to repeat a story with the difference that you are now part of this story, whereas before you were not. What does it mean to write a counternarrative? Counternarratives create a competing worldview, thus developing another vision about us and our place in society and in nature.

Feiner's book offers a compelling account of the inner-Jewish counternarratives developed by *maskilim* such as Naphtali Herz Wessely, Isaac Satanow, Moses Mendelssohn, and Isaac Euchel. Taking up Spinoza's critique of theology, Mendelssohn presented a counternarrative that opened up a new view of both the Jewish and non-Jewish world that remarkably differed from that offered by the rabbinic elite. His counternarrative was twofold. He undermined the Kantian proclamation of the compatibility between Christian moral truth and the establishment of a modern secular society by presenting Judaism as the blueprint for the natural religion that characterizes the intellectual outlook of modernity. At the same time he differentiated between the Christian dogma of revealed religion and the open-mindedness toward other creeds that marks off Judaism as revealed religion from the exclusivity of Christianity. This differentiation called into question the element of faith that the rabbinic elite vigorously upheld. Feiner shows how the Prague Rabbi Yehezkel Landau and Rabbi Raphael Suesskind Kohen of Hamburg-Altona strongly attacked both Mendelssohn and Wessely for belittling Judaism's fideistic foundations (Kohen even tried to excommunicate Mendelssohn). As Feiner emphasizes, Rabbi Yehezkel Landau devoted his sermon against Mendelssohn and Wessely "to reinforcing the religious faith" of his audience: "He [Landau]

¹⁸ Compare Mack, *German Idealism and the Jew*.

recited to them [his Prague congregation] the principles of Jewish faith (creation, providence, reward and punishment, revelation) and stated: 'We must caution against inquiring into matters relating to faith, and all the words of the scholars, whether Jews or men of other nations are sheer non-sense in a matter that is beyond the reach of human understanding, and the crux of the matter is faith, not intelligence or inquiry.'¹⁹ In contrast to Spinoza, radical Enlightenment *Haskalah* thinkers like Mendelssohn, Wessely, and Euchel did not reject a life according to Jewish law. What they questioned were religious claims to exclusivity as based on the fideistic foundations of revelation. After Mendelssohn's death (1786), it became, however, increasingly clear that this sought-after balance between the observance of religious commandments and the appreciation of secular culture (understood as including science) was soon prone to fall prey to the forces of disintegration.

The *maskilim* responded to the challenges of modernity by formulating a middle way that would avoid the Scylla of materialist debauchery and the Charybdis of religious bigotry, which they saw as resulting from the political equation of religion with blind faith. Yet at the end of the eighteenth century, the *Haskalah* had fallen victim to the forces it had tried to overcome. Mendelssohn's children converted to Christianity. This of course played into the hands of the rabbinic elite. It seemed to be proof of the insipidness of the Jewish Enlightenment. In reality it testified to the egregious political as well as religious pressures that the new generation of Jews faced at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the *Haskalah*, as Feiner's groundbreaking book clearly shows, had a preeminent impact on the intellectual and political development of modern Jewish society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Its immediate sphere of influence was thus primarily an internal one. Feiner's *Jewish Enlightenment* revises the conventional view according to which the *Haskalah* was exclusively concerned with paving the way for assimilation:

If we conceive of the *Haskalah* as an internal revolution affecting Jewish society and culture, and not a crisis or a milestone in the course of the Jews' integration, assimilation, or abandonment of the "ghetto" for the sake of the temptations "outside," we arrive at a different picture. In an intensive process of criticizing, rebelling, sketching a vision, and struggling for a central place in the public sphere, the revolution did not lead the Jews out of the ghetto, but rather attempted to renew the face of the Jewish collective. The majority of the *maskilim* were not assimilating intellectuals intent upon destroying the collective; rather they were transformationists, intent upon rehabilitating it.

¹⁹ Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, 141.

They instilled liberal values into the Jews, advocated a new order and demanded that their voice be heard so that the Jews could live in an age of change and revolution as European men of culture who are also committed to nurturing their particular Jewish culture and improving the framework of Jewish life.²⁰

Feiner's book thus focuses on the inner Jewish debates about Enlightenment values. It complements my new book, *German Idealism and the Jew*, which discusses the other side of modern Jewish thought, namely, its external counternarratives in relation to rather hierarchical and exclusionary conceptions of modernity. The Janus-faced critique of the ideational structure both within traditional Jewish society and within the non-Jewish world highlights the independent and nonassimilationist stance of the *Haskalah*.

²⁰ Ibid., 369.

Book Reviews

WATSON, FRANCIS. *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*. New York: T&T Clark International, 2004. xx+584 pp. \$145.00 (cloth); \$39.95 (paper).

Just as Watson assisted the famed Sherlock Holmes in search of clues to solve nigh unsolvable crimes, this Watson (Francis) sifts Paul's letters, Scripture, and Jewish commentary for clues to the logic of Paul's hermeneutic. His judgments that cut against the grain of a generation of Pauline scholarship (274–76) will doubtless stir up a hornets' nest and may even provoke fresh appraisals of Paul and the law.

This hefty tome places Paul in a circle of Jewish scriptural interpretation contesting the legitimacy of rival truth claims. The lens through which Watson shows Paul interpreting texts is the Messiah Jesus, and that a priori commitment (*sic*, not dogma) becomes the organizing center of Paul's hermeneutic. Watson claims that Paul privileged a handful of scriptural texts (Hab. 2:4b, Gen. 15:6, Lev. 18:5, and Deut. 30:11–20, 32:1–52) in light of which he read all others in order to legitimize his hermeneutic. That theme runs like a golden cord throughout this four-part book.

Part 1, "Antithesis," enunciates the motif of the entire book when it opens with a treatment of Rom. 1:1–3:31 under the heading "Justification and Hermeneutics." Here Watson sharply juxtaposes judgment and justification—judgment for the colossal and universal human failure to keep the law (Rom. 1:18, 3:10) and justification for the "righteousness" that comes through faith in Jesus Christ (3:22). The key role in Paul's hermeneutical reading in "black and white" (167–68) is played by Hab. 2:4 (Rom. 1:17; 429, 323).

As proof of the legitimacy of this appeal, Watson notes the central role of Habakkuk in the collection of the twelve prophets (78–126), and in a crucial interpretative move Watson follows the Masoretic Text (MT), taking Hab. 2:4b to refer to the "person justified" by faith, rather than the Septuagint (LXX), which focuses on the God who justifies (LXX, 49; 158–59). He claims some support from 1QpHab viii.1–3, reading "by faith [fullness]" to mean "their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness" (159); however, Paul's awareness of that usage seems remote.

In parts 2, 3, and 4, Watson compares Paul's appeal to texts from Exodus through Deuteronomy with those of rival Jewish interpreters (Sirach, 1 Maccabees, Philo, Josephus, 4 Ezra, et al.). Against a rival understanding of Abraham as righteous by law observance (Gen. 17:11–14), "Promise" (pt. 2, 167–272) focuses on Abraham righteous by faith and the forefather of believing Gentiles (Gen. 15:6; 17:11–14, Rom. 4). In "Wilderness" (pt. 3, 356–414; Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers), Watson says, Paul found proof that promise of life through law observance (Lev. 18:5) was empty, and the colossal failure to keep the law brought death instead of life (Numbers). The story finds a promised resolution in part 4 (415–533), where Moses's "Last Words" make the

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"curse" on lawbreakers the key to understanding Israel's history (Deut. 27–30, Baruch, Gal. 3:11–13; 526) and ends with the promise of salvation not by law observance but through God alone. Thus, a history marked by human failure brings the Torah to a hopeful end (Song of Moses, Deuteronomy 32). A warrant for this novel reading of Deuteronomy Watson finds in 4 Ezra, which postdated Paul by at least a generation (503–13)!

It is refreshing to find a New Testament scholar seriously engaging the texts of the Hebrew Bible and extrabiblical Jewish texts as well. Moreover, one must salute him for his treatment of Paul as a Jew engaged in a contest with other Jews, both Christian and non-Christian, in a struggle to secure the legitimacy of his scriptural interpretation. On the downside, however, the work suffers at important points. Its treatment of Paul's view of law primarily as prescription is simplistic and unnuanced. Fundamental to the work's thesis is a reading of Hab. 2:4 that goes with the MT that reads the "righteous shall live by his faith[fullness]" instead of the Septuagintal reading, "my [God's] faithfulness" (152–57). But given Paul's preference for the LXX the argument is weak, and without this crucial piece of evidence Watson's thesis collapses. Finally, the work cries out for a more complex view of Paul's hermeneutic that takes into account the role the context played in its formation. So, though this work is provocative, important, and may be lasting, one is left to wonder if Watson provides the great intuitive leaps that allowed Sherlock Holmes to make amazing breakthroughs to decipher the great riddles of a crime.

CALVIN J. ROETZEL, *University of Minnesota*.

ALEXANDER, LOVEDAY C. A. *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles*. Library of New Testament Studies 298. London: T&T Clark, 2005. xi+290 pp. \$130.00 (cloth).

In these ten essays stemming from 1993–2004, together with a prefatory piece connecting dots and underlining theses, Alexander pulls together some of her major contributions to the study of Acts. She exhibits a strong philological base, the ability to write lucid prose animated with verve and wit, and considerable imagination. Rather than view the problems and questions raised by Acts as simply challenges to be rebuffed or obscured within clouds of conflicting arguments, she recognizes that these are also opportunities for shedding light on this deceptively transparent book.

Alexander works with a big circle and a small circle. The small circle comprehends the prefaces to Luke and Acts, which, as she has demonstrated, do not evoke conventional historiography. Their best affinities are with technical works. From that arises the need for a wider generic net including philosophical biography, ethnic historiography, romantic fiction, epic, and apologetic. These essays constitute spokes that link the two circles. The set is far from complete, as Alexander would be the first to acknowledge, but readers will be grateful for the spokes that she here provides.

After concluding that the prefaces do not resolve the genre question, she turns to the proposal of Charles H. Talbert that Luke and Acts belong to the philosophical tradition that followed a biography of the founder with information about his successors (43–68). Alexander finds this proposal quite attractive but not sustained by the available literature. The probe does, however,

lead her to a profile of the widespread "Socratic" pattern that provides one model for reading Acts—and surely is an influence upon it.

Two brilliant essays follow (69–96, 97–131). The first takes up the inviting comparison of travel between Acts and two romantic novels. Ideal romance prefers "there and back" plots, unlike Acts, which, after a number of forays to and from Jerusalem, moves to Rome. Alexander introduces the concept of "mental maps," a familiar American example of which is the *New Yorker* map of the United States that devotes most of its space to the metropolis. She finds that "Luke's story really has two mental maps, one centred on Jerusalem and one on the Mediterranean" (79). Whereas romantic novels find exotic regions to the south and east, Acts tends to invert the model. These explorations, which contain many interesting and useful details, including numerous maps, illuminate the roles of geography in shaping narrative and viewpoint. The observation that the epistolary Paul expressed little interest in the means and details of travel exposes how easily Acts and letters are harmonized.

"Fact, Fiction, and the Genre of Acts" (133–63) is probably the best-informed and most dispassionate short study of these difficult questions. Alexander examines the issues from the ancient perspective, the conventions of which differ from those of post-Enlightenment times. "Moral" truth could be more important than conformity to facts, and authorial claims are open to objection. Attention to the plausibility of each episode and a generous splash of what passed for verisimilitude often sufficed. Educated polytheist readers would have been unlikely to view Acts as "true," but Luke does not engage in the debate, for he produced a narrative that, whatever its genre, does not fit "within the standard fact/fiction grid of Greek literature" (163).

The review of comparisons of New Testament narrative with ancient epic (165–82) rejects the characterization of Mark or Acts as "prose epics" after Homer and Vergil while, at the same time, happily acknowledging the contributions of these hypotheses. The discussion of Acts as "apologetic" (183–206) is more conventional, albeit not without insight. Even more conventional is her analysis of the ending of Acts and its relation to the question of unity (206–29). In the final chapter (231–52) Alexander pulls her two circles together in an analysis of Lucan style, deploying both linguistic theory and traditional philological research. Luke's use of "standard Hellenistic prose" and his selection of the Septuagint as the model for imitation place him within the middle range of Hellenistic Jewish literature. Although Alexander does not develop the point, this style was highly congenial to his portrayal of the continuity between Israel and the church. Much important work on Acts has emerged in collections of essays, to the company of which this book is a worthy accession.

RICHARD I. PERVO *St. Paul, Minnesota.*

KRUEGER, DEREK. *Writing and Holiness: The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East*. Divinations. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. 298 pp. \$59.95 (cloth).

Derek Krueger's work leads us rightly to expect in this book the affirmation of a basic tenet: that to write about holiness in late antiquity was to strive for holiness in oneself; it was an ascetic exercise. It follows, in his view, that texts

were performative acts, which tell us as much about an author's milieu as about the world he described. Both arguments are convincing, echoing as they do Evelyne Patlagean's "Ancienne hagiographie byzantine et histoire sociale" (*Annales* 23 [1968]: 106–26), which Krueger cites.

Some of the chapters reproduce earlier work but in freshened form, and they are enhanced in the remaining half of the book by important additional comment and insight. Together, they constitute what Krueger calls "a series of soundings in early Christian literature" (10). The resulting and welcome advantage is a fuller analysis of each text, and one detects a remarkable and reassuring breadth of reading in more theory-oriented sectors of the field.

The study of hagiography has had a bumpy path since the work of Hippolyte Delehaye (*Les légendes hagiographiques* [Brussels, 1905]). We have long parted company, however, with a view of the matter that concentrates on the genres that supposedly lie within or before it. As Krueger declares, "Too much emphasis on literary dependence occludes more defining factors" (13), and by "defining" he means especially novel. Of special importance in the Christian sphere is the notion of incarnation, whereby "word" is made "flesh." "Hagiography did," Krueger writes, "and does, offer images of holiness embodied," and he expands the implications by referring to "textual identities invested with cultural value" (194). The reference is lateral rather than diachronic. Of the new material in the book, and perhaps for that reason, I enjoyed particularly chapter 7, "Textual Bodies: Plotinus, Syncletica, and the *Teaching of Addai*" (133–57). Porphyry "embodied" Plotinus in his *Life* in the face of his subject's reluctance to admit embodiment. To be written about was tantamount to losing one's struggle to escape from the body and from the transient material world. The *Life*, therefore, subverted the very tenor of its subject's philosophy—a ruse we might beware in many less candid (and Christian) portrayals.

One antecedent, however, one could not ignore: the existence of the Bible as an epitome of a sacred text made writing anything else a problematic encroachment on its territory. But Christians were not overawed thereby. Krueger recounts (33–62) how biblical writers, especially evangelists, were described and portrayed in later periods, and one is struck by the constant reappraisal involved. They awakened both admiration and curiosity as writers, and the reappraisal therefore betokened a changing view of what a Christian writer was (and how much of Scripture he could either purloin or recast).

Krueger is also skillful in presenting hagiography as a liturgical exercise, demonstrated in its deployment of sacrificial and sacramental imagery. But it was also an instrument of cultic recognition; the text transformed its subject into an object of devotion, and thus it "underscores the centrality of narrative to cult" (92). Within the framework of the book as a whole, one begins to wonder (and perhaps not irresponsibly) whether narrative was the cult.

Although he focuses on hagiography, much of what Krueger says applies to all writing, especially as it forms an author's self-identity. Both in creating an image of one's self and in transmitting in tangible (embodied) form an absent person, hagiography, thus understood, has much in common with epistolography—particularly with "ancient tropes about the simultaneous presence and absence of writers in their letters" (151).

The argument at the heart of this book is crucial to more than the social history of asceticism. The author rightly laments the fact that "traditional di-

visions between patristics and social history continue to exclude theology and religious composition from discussions of piety on the assumption that thought and action are separable" (4). "Christian biography," he believes (echoing explicitly Susan Ashbrook Harvey), "is a theological enterprise, an effort to understand the subject within the religious vision of the author" (113). There is no doubt that he has gone far to draw us closer to an understanding of that view, with style and learning.

PHILIP ROUSSEAU, *Catholic University of America*.

MEYER, ANN R. *Medieval Allegory and the Building of the New Jerusalem*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003. x+214 pp. \$70.00 (cloth).

Interdisciplinarity is a siren song in contemporary scholarship. The fragmentation of knowledge characteristic of the postmodern condition has spawned interest in crossing the boundaries of established disciplines. This bodes well for fields of study that have hitherto been immune to "foreign" inquiries. Yet, as with that of the Homeric Sirens, the call of interdisciplinarity can be dangerous to heed. Too often the skills and knowledge needed to examine the texts and artifacts of another field are elusive. Such is the case with this study by Ann R. Meyer, a scholar of medieval literature. The study, based on her 1997 dissertation at the University of Chicago, promises to explore the allegorical construction of the New Jerusalem in medieval prayer, architecture, and poetry. Such concatenation of areas, while not original, should be fruitful; indeed, this book shows potential in its scope and breadth of imagination. Unfortunately, the work promises much more than it actually delivers; it also demonstrates the danger of our current scholarly piety: excessive dependence on (a limited number of) secondary sources, unclear progression from evidence to argument in the vastly different fields, and dogged adherence to a theoretical model without adequate caution in its application across disciplinary boundaries.

Meyer's book begins with a helpful introduction to the main theme of the book, that is, the importance of allegory in medieval culture. In seeking to connect the propensity of medieval biblical exegesis toward allegory with concrete expressions in liturgy, architecture, and poetry, Meyer shows good scholarly intuition. The remainder of the study, divided into three sections, is less successful. The first section deals with the philosophical underpinnings of the allegory in chapters on Plotinus and Augustine. Meyer correctly notes the importance of Augustine in transforming and transmitting the Plotinian ontology to the Middle Ages. These two chapters are synthetic in nature, drawing on a respectable range of secondary studies. Nevertheless, they are superficial and, especially in the case of the Augustine chapter, frustratingly vague. Part 2 moves to liturgical and architectural considerations. In chapter 3, the abbey of Saint-Denis is examined. In particular, Meyer looks at the creation of the New Jerusalem in the renowned "metaphysics of light" associated with Suger's Gothic project and in the liturgical feast of dedication celebrated there in the thirteenth century. Much can be (and has been) said about the meaning of this Gothic church and its dedication liturgy, and Meyer does an adequate job explicating the text of the feast. Unfortunately, she is not adequately versed in what has already been said, nor does she demonstrate familiarity with the standard tools of the liturgical historian

(e.g., the *Corpus antiphonalium officii*). More problematic, she rarely leaves the liturgical text, and one is left alone to ponder the experience of such a liturgy in such a place. The fourth chapter, on English chantry chapels, errs on the opposite side of the liturgy/architecture divide. The chapter contains an admirable recitation of the elements of English Gothic style, but it is long on description and very short on explication. Meyer stresses the importance of these architectural monuments in their time and place, a fact that becomes all the more important in the final chapters on *Pearl*, the fourteenth-century poem. Yet, her exhaustive catalog of architectural features does not serve the flow of her argument.

The third section, dedicated to poetry, is the most successful of the three, yet it is quite narrow in its conception. One ventures to suggest that this is so because the close reading of *Pearl* (and other works by the *Pearl* poet) lies closest to the author's heart and expertise. Here, Meyer seeks to demonstrate that the theory of allegory described by Plotinus, baptized by Augustine, and emplaced in Gothic liturgy and architecture, is the key to reading *Pearl*. She suggests that ornament (and other architectural features) in the poetic *ekphrasis* of the New Jerusalem serves as the "veil of allegory," that is, the screen that separates image from reality while also inviting the viewer to seek that reality. This idea, while interesting, needs to be subjected to the discussion currently underway about the nature of *ekphrasis* in ancient and medieval poetry, a debate Meyer seems to know little about. In the final chapter, Meyer synthesizes studies of *Pearl* that address the liturgical qualities of the poem with those studies that take in the architectural elements. This is a welcome combination, yet, as with the study as a whole, it suggests more than it can properly address and, ultimately, fails to achieve its worthy aim.

JENNIFER A. HARRIS, *University of Toronto*.

MOST, GLENN W. *Doubting Thomas*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005. xv+267 pp. \$27.95 (cloth).

Although Thomas's encounter with the risen Jesus appears in only one gospel (John's) and occupies a mere six verses there, the figure of Doubting Thomas has played a surprisingly significant role in the art and literature of the past two millennia. Glenn Most suggests that following this minor New Testament character through history can, among other things, provide a window on important issues and historical movements in Christianity and Western culture.

The first part of Most's work explores the issue of doubt in the gospels. While doubt is a concern in all of the canonical gospels, its most significant manifestation appears toward the end of John's account. Most includes an extensive analysis of John 20, and he argues from that analysis that the Johanne text strongly implies that Thomas never touched Jesus's wounds despite the apostle's earlier claim that he would not believe in the resurrection without tactile proof. Regardless—as the reader will see throughout the rest of Most's book—since John 20 nowhere explicitly states that Thomas either did or did not touch Jesus when afforded the opportunity, conflicting claims were later made about Thomas's action (or lack thereof). And these claims were usually tied to doctrinal disputes.

The second part of the book begins with an analysis of the various narrative developments of the Thomas tradition. Some noncanonical narratives portray

Thomas as a kind of Gnostic saint. Most suggests that Thomas gained such saintly status because he embodied three essential qualities valued by Gnostics: knowledge over faith, spirit over matter, and a concern for the elite over the masses. Implicit in these noncanonical narratives is the assumption that the apostle did not touch the resurrected Jesus (an assumption that is hardly surprising in these Gnostic-leaning texts).

Next, Most considers (orthodox) exegetical reactions to the canonical Thomas story. From the early church fathers through the medieval period, the exegetical tradition assumed (with few exceptions) that Thomas indeed touched Jesus's wounds. Given the church's struggle with Gnosticism, the reason for the assumption is obvious. The fleshly resurrection of Jesus countered Gnostic claims that tied the realm of the flesh to ignorance and evil.

It was only with the Reformation (and its emphasis on faith over works, its renewed focus on Scripture and its disdain for nonbiblical texts and tradition) that the orthodox interpretation was overturned. Of course, the Counter-Reformation reacted against the reformers' new interpretation in a predictable manner.

Most rounds out his study of the Thomas tradition by examining various visual depictions of the Doubting Thomas episode. From Most's perspective, Caravaggio's early seventeenth-century *Doubting Thomas* represents, if not the apex of the pictorial tradition, then certainly its most interesting moment. Most contends that this highly ambiguous painting illustrates, in a remarkable way, the tension between faith and doubt, a tension that later works resolved in one way or another. Because of the distinctiveness of Caravaggio's painting, Most dedicates a significant portion of his book to its analysis.

The penultimate chapter of the work, entitled "The Holy Finger," centers on the relic of the finger of Thomas at the Basilica of Santa Croce in Rome (a photo of which appears as the book's frontispiece). This brief chapter touches on a few of the ambiguities and ironies surrounding the relic. Among the ironies is Most's observation that the relic allows "all those who believe to have their belief strengthened and . . . all those who doubt to find their doubts confined" (220–21).

Finally, Most claims that the ambiguous figure of Doubting Thomas is worthy of our attention not only because of that character's ability to illuminate important historical issues and controversies but also because we are beset by similar ambiguities today. We live in a culture based upon skepticism, but, at the same time, we are unable to maintain our skepticism consistently. We take many things "on faith" (e.g., language, tradition, and society).

Overall, Most's book is a fascinating account of the journey of the figure of Doubting Thomas through Western history. Because of the book's scope, any number of criticisms could be leveled against it. For instance, it pays too much attention to those subjects that particularly interest Most (like Caravaggio's painting), and it pays too little attention to other matters. Specialists, in particular, might find much to contest. The book oversimplifies history in some places and literature in others. Regardless, while perhaps this book is somewhat quirky and less systematic than some would like, it is thought provoking and consistently interesting. *Doubting Thomas* is a must for libraries, and undergraduate libraries in particular. It would make an interesting addition to any course on the history of Christianity or Western culture.

PAUL B. DUFF, *George Washington University*.

HENDRIX, SCOTT H. *Recultivating the Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004. xxiv+254 pp. \$29.95 (paper).

In this overview of the religious transformations in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, Scott H. Hendrix proposes the term "Christianization" to encapsulate the common aim of the various branches of reform—for example, Protestant, Radical, and Roman Catholic—that developed into distinct and competing religious confessions over the course of the century. He thus aligns himself with those scholars who detect a unifying impulse driving the diverse, competing visions of Christianity espoused by the religious reformers of the period. However, rather than identifying this common concern as "reformation," Hendrix takes a cue from the vocabulary of the reformers themselves and the terms in which they described their own goals. Asserting that the sixteenth-century reformers "set for themselves the goal of Christianizing Christendom" (xvii), he contends that the distinctive religious agendas of Lutherans, Reformed, Radicals, and Roman Catholics grew out of a common, medieval vision of a Christian Europe—a vision that all agreed needed to be implemented more completely in order to make society and church "more Christian."

Following upon the introduction, six chapters explore the different perspectives on that common vision that manifested themselves in the agendas of the various reforming branches or movements. The chapters follow an order that is customary in Reformation textbooks. The first chapter provides background by outlining the medieval vision of a Christian Europe up through the rise of humanism. Chapter 2 focuses on Martin Luther's agenda for a "Christian Germany." Chapter 3, titled "The Urban Agenda: A Christian Society," examines the religious reforms in Zurich, Strasbourg, and Geneva. Despite the title, Hendrix does not appear to find the idea that there was a markedly different character to the Reformation in the cities compelling; he admits that "it is difficult to find a significant difference between [Calvin's] program of reform and the visions of Zwingli and Bucer or, for that matter, Luther" (70). Chapter 4 examines the for the most part marginalized "radical agendas" under the rubric of "Christianization outside Christendom." "Christianization within Catholicism" is the topic of chapter 5. A concluding chapter considers briefly the outcome of these various Christianization agendas in their impact on piety and religious practice, in the establishment of politically sanctioned religious confessions, in missionary campaigns outside of Europe, in attitudes toward Judaism and Islam, and theological views of history.

I am in fundamental sympathy with Hendrix's plea for a "big picture" or macrohistorical view of the Reformation as a coherent historical movement—a view that does not, however, lose the trees for the forest (xv). Hence I also appreciate his efforts to make clear that this unifying aim does not diminish the often-bitter conflicts over what would in fact constitute a Christian society and how that goal would be best achieved. Moreover, the book makes good use of the many recent, local historical studies of sixteenth-century Christianity to illustrate the extreme diversity of agendas surrounding the common goal. Concerning the term "Christianization" as the best way of describing the unifying mentality common to all of them, however, I am somewhat ambivalent. Granted, the case for this aim being common to various reforming movements is clearly made, and it is helpful to think about the differences as reflecting

different visions of how to implement that agenda. But, as I am sure Hendrix would agree, the aim of making people more Christian, however defined, is not unique to the Christianity of medieval and early modern Western Europe but is rather to a greater or lesser extent an element in all forms of Christianity. Indeed, for general scholars of religion, perhaps the most intriguing element of this book is the invitation it affords for consideration of the profoundly proselytizing character of Christian self-understandings, taking the sixteenth-century transformations of Christianity as an exemplary case study. The book is accessibly written and would serve well as a classroom textbook, although a map would have enhanced its role in this regard.

BARBARA PITKIN, *Stanford University*.

CHRYSSAVGIS, JOHN. *In the Heart of the Desert: The Spirituality of the Desert Fathers and Mothers; with a translation of Abba Zosimas' Reflections*. Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2003. xvii+163 pp. \$17.95 (paper).

Two distinct but related phenomena account for the large numbers of books written recently about early Christian monks. Over the last forty years, as the significance of sexual practice and gender differentiation have influenced the subject of scholarly study, the ancient monastic renunciation of sexual activity and childbearing and the consequent disregard for gender roles have led to sustained investigations of monastic institutions, practice, and thought. If psychological development has been, since World War II, regarded as including the practice of sex for its own enjoyment, then the abstinence from sex seems increasingly curious, and the historical context that produced it becomes both strange and in need of explanation.

The second phenomenon is the increasing attraction of spirituality as distinct from settled religious communities and their rituals. Spirituality is something that a religious seeker can practice alone, although a spirituality may be shared by members of a religious tradition. It has long been common to speak of monastic spirituality or to further differentiate it into Benedictine spirituality, Franciscan spirituality, and so forth. With the entrance of Eastern religious practice into the West, and with the popular interest in religions in general along with an eclectic approach to religious practice, "spirituality" has famously become a general category—often to contrast favorably with a particular tradition, with its old and elaborate limitations.

In the context of the latter, the same monastic literature that is often studied in the context of historical investigation can also serve a more practical purpose that some would describe as pastoral: ancient writings that portray, to some degree, ancient monastic life can now be used to guide those in search of a more rewarding spirituality than they would find in a religious community, or—and this is especially true in the case of monastic literature—to understand the psychological aspects of spiritual practices and what character traits impede or advance the approach to God.

The series in which *In the Heart of the Desert* appears can stand as an example of this trend. Its publisher, World Wisdom Books, lists no less than one hundred titles ranging from Buddhist to Native American texts, with the aim of making available "the timeless Truth underlying the diverse religions. . . . Often referred to as the Sophia Perennis or perennial Wisdom, [it] finds its

expression in the revealed Scriptures, as well as in the writings of the great spiritual masters and in the artistic creations of the traditional worlds."

Given the aim of the series, the scope and content of Chryssavgis's book are readily understandable. This is a topical survey of an English translation (with consultation of the Greek text) of the fifth-century Sayings of the Desert Fathers (Benedicta Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* [London: Mowbray, 1975]). It aims to present the sayings as a spirituality that was "revolutionary" for its time. Unlike philosophy or psychology, it was not concerned with metaphysics or the stages of human development, respectively; rather, it was a "spirituality of imperfection" that developed in Egypt and Palestine in the fourth through the sixth centuries. It eschewed sophisticated education and ecclesiastical hierarchy and, retiring to deserted places, it depended upon the relationship of master and disciple in order to prepare the monk—male or female—for the ongoing encounter with God. Although the Sayings present monastic teachings alphabetically, under the name of particular monks, Chryssavgis has grouped these teachings under themes, beginning in the fourth chapter with "the desert as space," by which he means both physical and metaphorical space. He covers the struggle against demons, patience in the cell, silence and tears, the heart, spiritual guidance, detachment, formation, solitude, miracles, prayer, and the encounter with God. Three chapters suggest contemporary concerns—the desert and the body, the desert and the environment, and the desert and gender. The first three chapters discuss the text of the Sayings, their historical period, and the most well-known monastics, including female monastics, quoted in their pages. Chryssavgis has also presented a new translation of the *Reflections* of Abba Zosimas, who flourished between 475 and 525 and was an appreciative reader of the Sayings.

Throughout this book the Sayings are treated as a reliable record of the first Christian monks. Scholars familiar with the textual history of the Sayings, as well as the complex and multiregional beginnings of the monastic movement, will want to argue with some of Chryssavgis's assertions. Readers encountering this literature for the first time, however, will find a sympathetic and clear presentation of the way of life and religious ideas of a highly distinctive assortment of early Christians.

ROBIN DARLING YOUNG, *University of Notre Dame*.

HERL, JOSEPH. *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism: Choir, Congregation, and Three Centuries of Conflict*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. xi+354 pp. \$65.00 (cloth).

Herl offers a revisionist history of the Lutheran Reformation and its music, arguing that Lutheran congregations were expected to sing little—and sang even less—for some two centuries after the Reformation. Not until the eighteenth century did a model of worship and music develop in which the laity "took ownership of the liturgy" and "the Lutheran Church became truly 'the singing church'" (179). The "worship wars" of the title are the seventeenth-century struggles over the relative place of choral music and congregational song in Lutheran liturgy.

In the course of his survey, Herl handily disposes of such chestnuts as the notion that Luther adopted secular music for his hymns or the accusation that the Pietists were sworn enemies of liturgy. Indeed, Herl argues that it was the

Pietists who established the liturgical pattern according to which congregations (and not choirs) were required to carry out the liturgy by singing hymns that each worshipper read out of a hymnal—a pattern that, according to Herl, has been projected back into the sixteenth century by modern scholars. Herl's work thus challenges the liturgical history of Paul Graff (and Walter Buszin's influential essay), which depicted the sixteenth century as the golden age of congregational liturgy from which later Lutherans fell away.

Herl has worked through an impressive body of source material, especially church orders and parish visitation records—though all from published editions—as well as hymnal prefaces, musicological works, and polemics. The author and his publisher are generous in reproducing much of this evidence, including a tabular survey of the church orders in the extensive appendixes of the book. Herl certainly succeeds in demonstrating that early Lutherans did not regard it as theologically necessary for lay congregations to sing the entire liturgy and that sixteenth-century patterns of congregational song were not those of the eighteenth—or twentieth—centuries.

And yet, amid Herl's labors to prove what did not yet exist in the sixteenth century, he can be of surprisingly little help in understanding why early Lutherans conducted their worship as they did, and he is overly dismissive of their accomplishments. Ambiguities in the evidence are consistently resolved in favor of his thesis—most often the church orders, for example, simply do not specify whether a part of the liturgy is to be sung by the choir or the congregation; most visitation reports do not comment for good or ill on the congregation's singing. Much of what Herl takes as criticism of congregational singing—repeated admonitions to cantors and choirs to teach the hymns to congregations, for example—are the conditions of a successful oral culture rather than marks of ongoing failure. Modest and nearly incontestable interpretations—as that sixteenth-century congregational singing “was not an unqualified success”—are clothed in vague quantifiers such as “many” and “often” that seem to have been chosen rather for their *affekt* than for any precision supported by the sources.

One surprising gap in Herl's research is the lack of homiletical material from the sixteenth century, especially since later sermons undergird his conclusion that congregational singing improved in the seventeenth century. A review of sixteenth-century preaching would have qualified such breathtaking pronouncements as that “sixteenth-century Lutherans had no need for a theology of church music; they never addressed the question of the purpose of music in the church” (123). Also lacking is a discussion of the role of Lutheran Latin schools, intimately bound up with the use of Latin in the service music. Given his dismissal of sixteenth-century Lutheran reflection on the role of music and Latin and vernacular texts in the service, Herl is left to invoke sheer “inertia” as the fundamental reason for continuing Lutheran use of Latin texts and choirs (177).

Nonetheless, Herl's book describes (though without acknowledgment) a fundamental shift in Lutheran piety, from an ideal in which the hymns were sung by heart to one in which reading a hymn from a hymnal was explicitly defended as “unquestionably better” for devotion (126). Herl follows his later sources in claiming that congregations singing from hymnals were able to learn more hymns (106)—but of course now the people did not have to “learn” anything at all in the sense that sixteenth-century Lutherans had thought most important. Given the alternatives of congregations that sang what they did sing

by heart or congregations that dutifully recited their appointed parts from a book, one may well be less confident than Herl in declaring the latter model the one in which the laity had finally "taken ownership of the liturgy."

CHRISTOPHER BOYD BROWN, *Boston University*.

KING, KAREN L. *The Secret Revelation of John*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006. xvi+397 pp. \$25.00 (cloth).

The basic thrust of *The Secret Revelation of John* is to offer a comparative English translation of the longer Nag Hammadi Codices II and IV and shorter Nag Hammadi Codex III and Berlin Gnostic Codex 8502 and an exposition of the content and intertextual affiliations of the *Apocryphon of John*. The book is also intended as an example of treating such works as individual texts in their own right rather than as instances of traditional heresiological categories such as "Gnosticism" or "Gnosticism literature." In this sense, it implements a recent trend begun by Michael Williams in his book *Rethinking Gnosticism* and continued in King's recent *What Is Gnosticism?* to refrain from interpreting such works in terms of their deviance from some presumed standard of ancient Christian orthodoxy.

In the introduction, King locates the *Apocryphon's* initial Greek composition in a second-century school setting in Alexandria, Egypt, by Christian intellectuals steeped in the lore of esoteric Jewish wisdom and scriptural exegesis, popular Greek philosophy, astrology, and demonology. These thinkers engaged in the interpretation of what were for them the culturally most authoritative texts of the time: the book of Genesis, Plato's *Timaeus* (and *Parmenides*), Jewish wisdom literature, and the Gospel of John, each of which forms a basic intertext for the *Apocryphon*. Further stages include the widespread Christian circulation of this text, even as far as Rome, where its initial theogony and cosmogony was refuted by Irenaeus as heretical teaching; its circulation along the Nile River in the form of at least three basic Coptic translations; its probable late fourth-century use by Pachomian monks attracted to its ascetic interpretation of Johannine tradition and who were perhaps responsible for the burial of these texts near Hammadi, Egypt; and a brief account of its modern journey from its discovery (the Berlin Codex in 1896 and the Nag Hammadi Codices in 1945) up to its recent publication in Wisse and Waldstein's *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2* (New York: Brill, 1996).

The book then offers facing-page translations of the shorter and longer versions of the *Apocryphon*, in which parallel sections are aligned for easy comparison, with footnotes calling attention to important deviations between the pairs of manuscripts that respectively document the shorter and longer versions. The translation is competent, with few departures from the standard editions; in some passages King achieves greater clarity, although some difficult turns of phrase in the initial negative theology seem to have escaped her mastery. While she provides a conversion index, King's decision to adopt a new numbering system demarcating the text according to her perception of its literary and sense units ends up supplying yet another numbering scheme for the *Apocryphon*: the traditional enumeration by codex page and line number, King's new scheme, and the scheme adopted by Wisse and Waldstein's *Synopsis*, to which she might have attempted to adhere.

The expository section of the book is divided into two parts. The first part discusses all the components of the *Apocryphon's* mythical theogony, cosmogony, anthropogony, and soteriology narrated by Christ to John, son of Zebedee. For King, this grand myth constituted a critique of late antique politics and society, in which the injustice, violence, and deception of its Roman rulers—who claimed that their authority was divinely sanctioned by culturally authoritative traditions from the past—are projected onto the cosmic plane of a false hierarchy of demonic powers who created and governed the world. Thus, such authoritative works as the book of Genesis, Plato's *Timaeus*, Jewish wisdom literature, and the Gospel of John formed the intertexts against which the *Apocryphon* weaves its narrative, presented as Christ's revelation of the perfection of the inhabitants of the Divine Realm contrasted with their false, deceptive, and violent lower imitations, and the epistemological and ritual means by which the reader may obtain purity, peace, and stability in a such a world. In this way, the *Apocryphon* transforms and corrects culturally regnant readings of scripture (Genesis, the Gospel of John), apocalyptic and wisdom literature, popular philosophy (Platonic, Stoic), and astrology by exposing their deceptions and retelling their stories according to the correct interpretation.

The second and most creative part of the expository section treats the *Apocryphon's* hermeneutical methods and strategies, containing separate subsections showing how it reinterprets Platonic philosophy (mainly the cosmogony and psychogony of the *Timaeus* and the negative predications of the One in the *Parmenides*), the Mosaic revelation (mainly the first nine chapters of Genesis), wisdom literature (mainly Proverbs and the Wisdom of Solomon), and the Fourth Gospel. A fifth subsection shows how the *Apocryphon* attempted to rectify problematic aspects, deceptions, and partial truths of both Genesis and Plato's *Timaeus* by combining them together into a double reading of Genesis that assigned a positive valence to their account of generation of the divine realm but a negative valence to their account of the generation of the lower, created order. The *Apocryphon's* strategy was to emphasize the *Timaeus's* distinction between the creator and his model by constructing an ontological hierarchy extending from the absolutely good divine archetype down to the relative deficiency of the creator and his product, in which both the God of Genesis and Plato's provident demiurge and his divine assistants were demonized as ignorant and malevolent bunglers who govern the world by the works of necessity and burden the immortal soul with senseless limitations, prohibitions, compulsive passions, and mortality itself. Instead of Philo's Platonic reading of Genesis 1 as the generation of the intelligibility of permanent being and Genesis 2 as the generation of the physical realm of impermanent becoming, the *Apocryphon* "reads both stories twice, one with regard to the creation of the Divine Realm and again with regard to the creation of the lower world" (221) such that "everything that happens in the upper world has its reflection or parodic imitation in the world below" (222). Thus transcendent entities such as the primordial light, the archetypal human (Barbelo), the divine Logos/Autogenes-Christ, the four Luminaries, the divine Adam, Seth and his seed, and Sophia's expulsion from the pleroma are negatively mirrored in the lower world by creator Archon's own fire, his fabricated protoplast, jealous boasting, creation of errant planetary powers, and Eve's expulsion from paradise. The glue connecting these figures and episodes together is the figure of Wisdom, who appears on the transcendent plane as Barbelo-Pronoia, Sophia, and Christ and in the lower world as Epinoia, Eve, and Jesus.

The book's final section, "The History of the Text," treats various additions to the shorter versions of the *Apocryphon* found in the longer versions. As part of her desire to counter the frequent charge that works like the *Apocryphon* exhibit a general "hatred of the body," King invokes (111–14, 152–53) the testimony of Celsus, Plotinus, and Porphyry to suggest that the lengthy list of demonic powers controlling each part of the human body attributed to a certain "Book of Zoroaster" was incorporated to supply the names of various powers to be invoked for the purpose of healing the parts of the body they controlled. However, the *Apocryphon* itself does not really say or suggest this. While her treatment of the long monologue of Pronoia-Barbelo that concludes the longer version is mainly indebted to the article of Bernard Barc and Louis Painchaud, "La r  criture de l'Apocryphon de Jean    la lumi  re de l'Hymne final de la version longue" (*Le Museon* 112 [1999]: 317–33), King adds many of her own adroit observations, especially the impact of the monologue's light imagery on the longer version's portrayal of the brilliance of Pronoia's light compared with the dimming of Sophia's light, its mythological justification for baptismal practice, its more negative assessment of the feminine with ignorance and sexual temptation, and its heightening of intertextual allusions to the Gospel of John. All in all, *The Secret Revelation of John* is an excellent and generally reliable book, suitable for both scholars and the general public alike. JOHN D. TURNER, *University of Nebraska–Lincoln*.

LUPIERI, EDMONDO. *The Mandaeans: The Last Gnostics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002. xix+273 pp. \$25.00 (cloth).

This evocatively titled book is the English translation of the original Italian work published in 1993. It is intended for anyone "interested in religion, not necessarily scholars or specialized researchers in the field" (xv). Written from a Western historical perspective and relying on the preceding works of Western scholars, travelers, and missionaries, it is the first attempt to reconstruct the history of the European perception of the Mandaeans and their religion. To do so, Lupieri has collected much archival material, much of which is published for the first time. This is, indeed, one of the book's most valuable aspects.

The first chapter, "History," commences with a descriptive account of the main events in the lives of Mandaean men and women. "Mandaeans: Their Life, Customs and Religious Rituals" imparts much detail but also highlights inherent concepts, for example, ritual purity. By contrast, the discussion on Gnosticism in the section "The Ideas" would have been better served by directing readers to encyclopedia and dictionary articles. Occasionally Lupieri delves into needless detail. A precise account of the "Book of the Zodiac" (41–45) would have sufficed, together with an explanation of the major concepts behind divination. On the whole, however, Lupieri succeeds in producing readable versions of the complex Mandaean myths and legends, simultaneously pointing out Judaic and Christian parallels. An annotated bibliography in the third section, "Instruments," conveniently presents the extensive range of Mandaean literature, providing a very useful starting point for further study. However, there are occasional lapses. A notable absence in the listing of magic texts is the one by J. B. Segal, with a contribution by Erica C. D. Hunter (*A Catalogue of Aramaic and Mandaic Incantation Bowls in the British Museum* [Lon-

don: British Museum Publications, 2000]), that presents forty previously unpublished Mandaic incantation bowls.

The second chapter forms the most valuable part of the book. "The Mandaeans and the West: A History of Interaction" probes the interaction between the Mandaeans and Christian Europe from the thirteenth century. Lupieri extracts much detail from medieval Italian accounts and successfully traces the numerous attempts of the Mandaeans to bolster their position within the larger framework of Portuguese colonial interests. The reader is led through the vicissitudes of the centuries, where the Mandaeans' tenacity (a quality that has stood them in good stead) emerges, despite the repeated prospects of a mass resettlement, possibly in India or in the Persian Gulf region. Lupieri is at his best in painting a compelling picture of the various stages of the Catholic mission: from its initial gains to its eventual failure that was realized in the eighteenth century. Not so successful are his surveys of later European contacts with the Mandaeans, culminating in the work of twentieth-century scholars. The last section deserves a more in-depth treatment and might have been reserved for a future work.

Acknowledging that histories are usually written from the viewpoint of the victor, the third chapter, "Legends and History," applies a critical analysis of written and oral traditions in order to answer questions about the history of the Mandaeans. Here Lupieri questions the theory of migration from Palestine, which first emerged in the seventeenth century, positing instead the transference of ideas over and above a physical exodus. Using extracts from Mandaean literature, he discusses Mandaean association with Judaism, Jerusalem, and the Egyptians. What clearly emerges is that there is no one fixed tradition but many variants. Over and above origins in Palestine, Lupieri categorizes the Mandaeans as an ethnoreligious reality of Mesopotamia and argues that Judaism and Christianity were already in existence when Mandaeanism was formed: it derived from their milieu but was already fledged when Manichaeism and Islam appeared (164–65). Mandaean literature, deriving from the first centuries CE, reflects in its bias the stronger stance of Judaism in Mesopotamia but has a nascent Christianity. Lupieri's conclusion with the Mandaean emergence in Characene at the end of the Arsacid empire finds support in the recent article by Häberl that suggests an Iranian origin for the distinctive script (Charles G. Häberl, "Iranian Scripts for Aramaic Languages: The Origin of the Mandaic Script," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 341 [February 2006]: 53–62).

The second major part presents an anthology of Mandaean literature. These extracts provide a taste of the wealth of Mandaean legends and myths that are often now in inaccessible or out-of-print works published by Western scholars. It would have been useful to cross-reference the discussion in earlier chapters to relevant excerpts, to embellish and endorse points. Here the glossary of terms is useful. The accompanying illustrations are interesting but need to be captioned. Many were from Kurt Rudolph's *Mandaeism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978); their source should be acknowledged.

In conclusion, this work provides a welcome starting point for its intended readership. It would also be useful as a text for students in religious studies courses.

ERICA HUNTER, *University of Cambridge.*

MARX, ANTHONY W. *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. xiii+258 pp. \$26.00 (cloth).

In *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism*, Anthony Marx claims that conventional histories attributing the growth of nationalism in the West to forces of inclusion, progress, and civic-mindedness are peddling mere mythology. For Marx, the origins of nationalism in the West reflect the same exclusionary and repressive forces often derided by Western historians as endemic to non-Western "ethnic" nationalism. Marx begins his retelling of the story with the centralization of authority in the early modern period of absolutism—two centuries before the French Revolution. He argues persuasively that, during this period, elites in France, England, and Spain effectively united the masses behind them by capitalizing on shared religious sentiment and the persecution of religious minorities. Cleansed of significant religious dissenters, by the late eighteenth century these nations could pursue civic and inclusive state-building policies with social solidarity based on relative religious homogeneity: "Liberal inclusiveness was consolidated on the basis of prior illiberalism" (165).

For Marx, conventional histories of nationalism err when they assume "the prior existence of self-conscious, homogeneous units of allegiance" (13). But in the early modern period, when national identities were being forged, mass communication was more often used divisively: to build solidarity through antipathy toward religious minorities. The absolutist monarchs of the sixteenth century initiated this process in their efforts to wrestle power from local lords: they raised taxes to pay for armies, they expanded markets, and they promoted cultural and linguistic contiguity. Above all else they needed loyal constituencies to tax and enlist in military service. Unfortunately, they tended to rule over diverse populations with long-standing antagonisms. Unable to unify the entire population, each monarch simply chose one core constituency to placate and galvanize.

Most important for Marx, this choice simultaneously identified the population that would not represent the crown: those who would have to be excluded and persecuted. And nothing informed the relationships, motivations, passions, and antagonisms of the common people in the sixteenth century more than religion. Religious ire provided a ready catalyst for the political mobilization required by the burgeoning state. The church was indispensable in such efforts, being the only pervasive social institution with wide popular support and a built-in system of mass communication.

In early modern Spain, France, and England Marx sees roughly the same pattern unfolding: the nation-state first arises with "ethnic nationalism"; a mass population divided by religious animosity erupts into conflict as, correlatively, elites participate in, manipulate, and exacerbate these same religious passions to benefit their own empowerment. This first phase is well illustrated by the Spanish Inquisition, which targeted Catholic dissenters, Jews, and Muslims. While the persecution of religious outsiders added coherence to Spanish Catholic identity under Ferdinand and Isabella, it also generated revenue for the monarchy in the form of confiscated Jewish and converso riches. And by securing the power to appoint priests, inquisitors, and bishops, the monarchy even managed to simultaneously assert its independence from Rome. The eventual expulsion of the Jews in 1492 also proved to be a shrewd act of national identity formation, a deep "cleansing" that retroactively established a sense of Spanish purity.

The second phase in the rise of the nation-state is a respite. After a violent purge renders the "foreign element" relatively innocuous, a more "civic nationalism" can be introduced. Marx provides Henri IV of France as an example of this phase. In 1598, only twenty-six years after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, a prolonged Catholic pogrom against the Protestant Huguenots, Henri issued the Edict of Nantes. The new legislation provided protection and civil recognition to Protestants, laying a foundation for the future French secular regime. Thus, exhausted by the costs of conflict and no longer threatened, elites magnanimously counsel prudence and promote coexistence.

But in unstable times, the first recourse of the vulnerable nation-state is to once again sound the public alarm and go after the Papist, the Huguenot, or the Jew. For Marx, then, national identity formation, built on violent exclusivist purges, clears the way for institutional state formation, resulting in a nation-state prone to occasional exclusionary regression. England models this tendency well, with John Locke's "Letter Concerning Toleration" (1689) as the quintessential case. The text is ostensibly a plea for religious tolerance, even as it includes barely veiled attacks on presumed disloyalty. Of Catholics: "Locke's proclamation of tolerance thus implicitly excluded the one group arguably most needing tolerance" (177). Locke's position in the annals of Enlightenment as the father of religious tolerance is Marx's example par excellence of liberal nationalism's strategic amnesia.

Marx continuously restates his national emergence model, but the model itself is explained clearly and bolstered with ample historical evidence. It is not clear, though, why Marx believes the world, embroiled in conflict, can ever "become truly modern and liberal," that is, "embrace the more difficult path of forging cohesion of an inclusive 'us' without an 'other'" (203). Rather, Marx seems to have made an excellent historical argument on behalf of the political theorist Carl Schmitt, for whom all political actions and motivations can be reduced to the distinction between friends and enemies.

JEFF ISRAEL, *Chicago, Illinois.*

REIMER, SAM. *Evangelicals and the Continental Divide: The Conservative Protestant Subculture in Canada and the United States.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003. xv+232 pp. \$65.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

A Canadian-born Pentecostal I know skips church on the Sunday closest to the Fourth of July. While embracing the core beliefs of his Bible Belt congregation, he is uncomfortable with the Star-Spangled Christianity of American civil religion. A new book by sociologist Sam Reimer suggests that he is not alone. In *Evangelicals and the Continental Divide*, Reimer compares and contrasts the worlds of Canadian and American evangelicalism. While most of the book documents the common faith of evangelicals north and south of the forty-ninth parallel, it ends by uncovering an important difference: Canadian evangelicals are allergic to the marriage of religion and conservative politics embraced by many of their American brothers and sisters.

Reimer arrived at his conclusions through interviews and surveys on both sides of the border. His sample of 386 Canadian and American evangelicals (clergy and lay) was drawn from thirty-eight congregations in four geographical areas: Winnipeg, Manitoba; Saint John/Moncton, New Brunswick; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Jackson, Mississippi. To supplement his research, Rei-

mer analyzed data from the 1996 "God and Society in North America" study, a massive survey of six thousand Canadians and Americans. Together, these data make *Evangelicals and the Continental Divide* the definitive comparative work on North American evangelicalism today.

With a title alluding to Seymour Martin Lipset's *Continental Divide* (New York, 1990), Reimer's book is part of a cottage industry of studies comparing Canada with its neighbor to the south. While Lipset has explored the differences between the political cultures of Canada and the United States, Mark Noll and George Rawlyk have analyzed the historical trajectories of evangelicalism on both sides of the border. Missing until now has been a systematic comparison of contemporary Canadian and American evangelicals. *Evangelicals and the Continental Divide* succeeds admirably in filling this gap.

One of Reimer's most interesting findings is how few differences separate Canadian from American evangelicals. Although previous studies have revealed stark differences between American and Canadian values, Reimer uncovers an interesting anomaly: evangelicals in the United States and Canada have more in common with each other than they do with their fellow citizens. "Even though nonevangelical Canadians are consistently less orthodox than American nonevangelicals," there are only "miniscule" theological differences between active evangelicals in each country (85). The differences are so small that at times I had the illusion I was reading a book about American evangelicals. Time after time, Reimer's Canadian evangelicals reminded me of the respondents profiled in Christian Smith's book *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*.

To explain the similarities among North American evangelicals, Reimer draws on Smith's theory of evangelical subcultural identity, positing the existence of a "transdenominational, transnational evangelical subculture" whose influence generally moves south to north (21). Through denominations, parachurch organizations, and Christian popular culture, evangelicals have bridged the continental divide. These subcultural institutions are so powerful they have eroded regional differences among Canadians. In Reimer's study, evangelicals in New Brunswick end up looking a lot like their counterparts in Manitoba.

Although most of Reimer's book describes the similarities between Canadian and American evangelicals, his penultimate chapter identifies several areas where national differences persist. The most important differences concern attitudes toward politics. While most American evangelicals are conservative Republicans, Canadian evangelicals "show minimal differences in political conservatism from other Canadians," identifying with the full spectrum of political parties from left to right (127). Likewise, Canadian evangelicals have no equivalent to the Yankee evangelical myth of "Christian America" and are less likely to believe their country is still a Christian nation.

Like most ambitious projects, *Evangelicals and the Continental Divide* has its shortcomings. In a study focused on only a handful of conservative Protestant denominations, Reimer pays insufficient attention to denominational differences. While acknowledging the importance of the sacraments to his Lutheran respondents, Reimer does not analyze the theological convictions behind such sentiments. Likewise, he makes only passing reference to the pacifism of Canadian Mennonites. By paying more attention to the persistence of Old World Protestant traditions in North America, Reimer could have nuanced his claims about evangelical homogeneity.

At the same time, one hesitates to tamper with a study so rich in comparative

insights. Combining cross-national, regional, and religious comparisons, Reimer somehow manages to keep all the balls in the air. Adding another axis of comparison might risk ruining an otherwise exemplary act of sociological juggling.

JOHN SCHMALZBAUER, *Missouri State University*.

BARNES, MICHEL RENÉ. *The Power of God: Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001. xvi+333 pp. \$64.95 (cloth).

This book, a revision of the author's PhD dissertation at St. Michael's College, Toronto, is both impressive and puzzling: impressive because of the author's obvious competence in treating a wide range of Greek medical and philosophical as well as early Christian writers, and puzzling because in a book of seven chapters and 307 pages (not counting the extensive bibliography and indexes) only the last two chapters (220–307) treat explicitly the topic indicated in the title.

The author is convinced that in order to understand the meaning and role of δύναμις in Gregory one has to study first the origins and the development of this technical term. Accordingly, the first chapter goes back to Preplatonic (*sic*) philosophy, and specifically to early Greek medical literature, where the notion of “power” (in particular the powers connatural with a thing) was first elaborated. In the second chapter, we find that Plato has appropriated and further developed this notion of power, extending it to nonmaterial entities, as, for example, the “idea” of the Good (*Republic* 509). Barnes castigates one-sided considerations of power, under the influence of neoscholasticism, using the Aristotelian categories of potency and act (δύναμις-ἐνέργεια). He is certainly right in affirming that Plato has influenced the philosophical—and also theological—thought of the early centuries after Christ far more than Aristotle; nevertheless, given the importance and influence of his notion of δύναμις, the absence of a chapter on Aristotle is surprising. The next chapter, in fact, leaps to “Δύναμις as a Theological Term among Pagans and Christians in the Early Common Era” (94–124), treating a wide array of pagan and Christian authors but giving, rightly, a special consideration to Origen (111ff.). Chapter 4, “Doctrines of Power in the Nicene and Pro-Nicene Controversies” (125–72), treats again a wide spectrum of writers in East (Athanasius, Eusebius) and West (Marius Victorinus, Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose). Barnes's terminology becomes clearer with the following quote: “In the pro-Nicene interpretation, ‘power’ implies the degree and kind of unity that obtains in an existent between what an existent is and the existent as it is capable of affecting or being affected, that is insofar as it is real or exists. This understanding of the relation of a power to a nature, for example, is justifiably called a technical sense of power” (151; see also 171–72). In the first half of the fourth century—according to Barnes—the use of this technical sense of power was weak; also later this “technical” understanding of power was common in Greek Christian theology but not so prominent in Latin authors.

With chapter 7, “The Pro-Nicene Doctrine of Divine Productivity” (220–59), and chapter 8, “Gregory of Nyssa on the Unity of Nature and Power” (260–307), we have arrived at the treatment of power in Gregory's Trinitarian theology. To quote part of Barnes's conclusion: “Gregory's argument that com-

mon power indicates common nature is typical of pro-Nicene polemic in both Greek and Latin writers. What is distinct in Gregory's version of this argument in *Against Eunomius* 1 is the consistent emphasis he gives to this power-based argument" (306). In opposition to "twentieth-century accounts of Cappadocian Trinitarian theology" that, in Barnes's opinion, considered *On the Holy Trinity* and *On "Not Three Gods"* as Gregory's central statements, Barnes insists that his writings *Against Eunomius* are more fundamental.

Barnes has the merit of having shown the origin and development of a very important philosophical and theological notion, though his survey is somewhat one-sided, since it is done in view of Gregory's use of this notion. He has also shown that δύναμις is an important category in Gregory of Nyssa's theology of the Trinity and, in particular, in his refutation of Eunomius.

One must, however, signal some critical reservations on Barnes's judgments. His repeated, prevailingly negative, summaries of twentieth-century Gregory of Nyssa scholarship are often simplifying and unfair (and in many cases given without references, so that one is left wondering as to the identities of the defective studies). His insistence on the "δύναμις-based" refutation of Eunomius by Gregory of Nyssa gives the impression that "divine power" is the central, if not the only, basis of Gregory's arguments against Eunomius—and this is certainly not the case.

Barnes's book, of course, could not make use as yet of the article "Δύναμις" in the magnificent *Lexicon Gregorianum* by Friedhelm Mann ([Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000], 2:502–38), which gives all the occurrences of the word δύναμις, in most cases with its context, organized according to meaning, grammatical form, and subject matter. As it seems to me, the results would agree with Barnes's conclusions as to the use of δύναμις to confirm or express the one and equal power of Father and Son and/or Holy Spirit yet show also a great variety of other uses of the term in connection with the Trinity.

DAVID L. BALÁS, *University of Dallas*.

LAIRD, MARTIN. *Gregory of Nyssa and the Grasp of Faith: Union, Knowledge, and Divine Presence*. Oxford Early Christian Studies. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. xi+240 pp. \$95.00 (cloth).

The primary goal of this book is to set Gregory's understanding of faith in relation to that of late Platonism, which viewed it as a "low and unreliable form of knowledge" (1). Laird is concerned with what he considers to be a technical use of the term "faith" in Gregory. It is "Gregory's term for that faculty of union between mind and God" (73). Laird's usual phrase for it is "exalted faith." While Neoplatonism also spoke of union with the divine, it considered this to be mediated by qualities and activities associated with the mind. Laird argues that Gregory does not neglect mind (*dianoia*) but, to the contrary, gives it a rather important role. Focusing on the discussion of Moses in the darkness of the sanctuary in the *De vita Moysis*, he argues that, in Gregory's understanding, *dianoia* leads one up to and even into this darkness of the presence of God, but, once there, it becomes incapable of understanding. In the darkness of the divine presence it is the faculty of faith that makes union with God possible.

Gregory develops his understanding, Laird argues, by focusing on certain persons of faith in the biblical story: "Abraham, Moses, the bride of the Song of

Songs, and Paul" (2). This list of persons naturally defines the main literary sources that are analyzed in the book: *Contra Eunomium II* (for Abraham), *De vita Moysis*, and *Commentarius in Canticum canticorum* (for the bride and for Paul).

In introducing Gregory's treatment of Abraham in *Contra Eunomium* 2, Laird notes that Bernard Pottier (*Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse, Ouvertures* 121 [Namur, 1994]) found two purposes in Gregory's argument at this point: (1) to show that the essence of God cannot be grasped by any human faculty and (2) to refute Eunomius's views. (Pottier's first point, it should be observed, was the central point of argument between Eunomius and Gregory.) He further notes that Mariette Canévet (*Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique* [Paris, 1983]) pointed out that Gregory had departed from the approach taken to the story of Abraham by the earlier Alexandrian exegetes, Philo and Origen, to adapt the story "to the exigencies of anti-Arian polemic" (69). Laird's own discussion of the story of Abraham, however, is rather dismissive of the Eunomian context. He thinks that because there was a "cluster of questions" concerning the knowability of God debated by philosophers quite apart from the Eunomian polemic "the more general encounter between Neoplatonism and Christianity" is the larger issue at stake in the text (75–76). The failure to give serious consideration to Gregory's deep involvement in the theological debate with the Eunomians in discussions about the limitations of mind and the centrality of faith is a weakness throughout the book. On the positive side, Laird notices the importance of Scripture to Gregory's vocabulary, imagery, and arguments. He makes the very important observation that Gregory reads the story of Abraham in Genesis 12 "through the lens of Hebrews 11:8" and that this latter text is a key for Gregory's solution of the problem of how to attain to an unknowable God (70).

A subordinate goal of the book (addressed explicitly in chap. 7) seems to be to challenge the standard view that Gregory's mysticism is a mysticism of darkness. Laird argues that it is a mysticism of light as well as of darkness. He finds the ascent into light associated with various themes in Gregory. One is Gregory's doctrine of the soul's perpetual progress in virtue. Homily 5 of the *Commentarius in Canticum canticorum* describes this as "a luminous ascent in virtue" (186). Gregory considers the life of virtue, Laird argues, to be an "important manifestation of divinization" (188). A closely related theme where Laird finds the emphasis to be on ascending into light rather than darkness in Gregory is that of the work of the Holy Spirit in the process of divinization. He finds the work of the Holy Spirit, especially in the *Commentarius in Canticum canticorum*, to involve dispelling darkness and producing "children of light" (190). In the final analysis, whether Gregory speaks of an ascent into darkness or an ascent into light depends on the vocabulary and imagery of the scriptural text he is discussing. This points, once again, to the determinative role of Scripture in Gregory's thought.

RONALD E. HEINE, *Puget Sound Christian College*.

KEATING, DANIEL A. *The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria*. Oxford Theological Monographs. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. x+315 pp. \$103.28 (cloth).

In this revised dissertation, Daniel Keating takes a close look at Cyril of Alexandria's biblical commentaries—primarily his commentary on the Gospel of

John—in order to develop Cyril's account of deification—or, as Keating prefers to term it, the appropriation of divine life, in a passive sense by the humanity that receives it and in an active sense by the God who gives it.

Keating helpfully situates Cyril's account within what Keating calls "a narrative of the divine life." Rather than simply treating select passages in Cyril's huge commentary on John of relevance to the topic, Keating, in other words, puts them together into a coherently structured story about God's intentions for the world, a story Keating believes effectively captures Cyril's major theological preoccupations as an exegete. Christ is at the center of this story of divine life, and it is his humanity that comes to the fore. Christ first enjoys in his human life the appropriation of the divine life that the Word becomes incarnate to give to others; by his divine power as the Word incarnate, Christ gives to his own humanity what other humans appropriate through him. This is fairly standard stuff, in the tradition of Irenaeus and Athanasius before him and Leo the Great after him, as Keating nicely points out. More unusual is Cyril's focus on Jesus's baptism in the Jordan as the key to a Spirit-centered reading of Christ as the new Adam. The Holy Spirit originally given to humanity at creation (Cyril's interpretation of Gen. 2:7) and lost through sin (his interpretation of Gen. 6:3) is regained through Christ's humanity in a now more secure way: that is the meaning of New Testament passages about the Spirit's resting on Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan. Since humans appropriate what Christ has achieved through these sacramental means, Keating goes on to offer an interpretation of Cyril's notoriously inconsistent pronouncements on baptism and eucharist. He also very helpfully discusses the ethical consequences of a renewed Spirit-filled life in Christ, modeled on the progressive sanctification of Christ's own humanity as that reaches its end in his ascension and enthronement.

Contrary to the common caricatures of Cyril, we have here, then, a theologian focused on the significance of Jesus's humanity for human life and on the sanctifying role of the Spirit in renewed human lives of ethical responsibility. The usual charge of a kind of mechanical "physicalism" in Cyril's theology is in this way effectively countered. Helped along by a final chapter that compares Cyril with such figures as Augustine and Leo the Great, the usual sharp contrast between a Latin stress on sanctification and a Greek emphasis on deification is also convincingly contested.

Besides being a first-class interpreter of Cyril, Keating has wonderfully refined theological sensibilities. He consistently poses appropriately critical theological questions of Cyril's work, often helpfully extending and improving Cyril's treatment of an issue in light of insights from, say, Irenaeus or Augustine. For example, following Irenaeus, Keating suggests Cyril could have made more of the way Jesus's reception of the Spirit played into his specific role as Messiah. Rather than being a mere sign of an already achieved state, the descent of the Spirit at Jesus's baptism might also have been considered one stage in the sanctification of his humanity marked by a progressive reception of the Spirit. If he had identified the Spirit with love as Augustine did, Cyril's treatment of a Spirit-filled sanctification of humanity would have been theologically richer, and so on.

Keating considers Cyril's biblical commentaries of more than antiquarian interest, then. He wrestles with the subject matter of these texts along with him. The result is a book from which specialists certainly but also any theologian hoping to think along with ancient texts will learn a great deal.

KATHRYN TANNER, *University of Chicago*.

GAVRILYUK, PAUL L. *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought*. Oxford Early Christian Studies. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. xii+210 pp. \$80.00 (cloth).

At the beginning of this elegant study, Paul Gavrilyuk notes that, among modern systematic theologians, something of a new orthodoxy has emerged—over the course of several decades—regarding the Christian doctrine of God: one that declares the God of Christian faith to be intrinsically passible and that regards the traditional dogmatic language of divine *apatheia* as little more than the residue of patristic theology's unfortunate liaison with pagan metaphysics (now mercifully dissolved). Invariably, as Gavrilyuk also notes, assertions of divine passibility go hand in hand with what amount to little more than caricatures of patristic theology. It is not uncommon, for instance, to see it confidently asserted that the fathers believed that only Christ's human nature was subject to suffering—although, in fact, the fathers were not in the habit of regarding either nature as an independent subject of experience but ascribed the sufferings of Jesus to the Person of the eternal Son, in whom these natures reside.

Gavrilyuk's purpose in this book is simply to correct the historical record on this issue and to lay out the logic of the traditional teaching. That said, the book is anything but a dry recitation of historical fact; rather, it provides a compelling argument in favor of the teaching of divine *apatheia*, as well as a desperately needed clarification of the issues it involves. Gavrilyuk begins by demonstrating, quite concisely and quite effectively, the degree to which modern Theopaschites find themselves continually obliged to deal with the same questions to which the fathers applied themselves and the degree to which those who want to speak of the "suffering of God" must consequently qualify their claims in such a way that they end up—almost inevitably—making an unconscious return in the general direction of the actual patristic position (though without the logical rigor of the fathers). Gavrilyuk also shows himself quite adept at dealing with the argument from facile philology—that God must have passions in order to be "com-passionate"—which is, as it turns out, little more than an argument from sentimentality, burdened by no small measure of conceptual confusion.

The course of Gavrilyuk's more constructive argument (to which the better part of the book is devoted) is lucid and easily followed. Concerning the notion that patristic thought simply adopted a fully developed understanding of divine impassibility from pagan sources, he makes it clear that this view is based upon a largely inaccurate picture of the philosophical "consensus" of pagan antiquity and upon an almost total failure on the part of many modern theologians either to have examined the actual patristic position on divine impassibility in any genuine depth or to have grasped how profoundly the Christian understanding of impassibility was shaped by Scripture and by doctrinal affirmations. Gavrilyuk takes his readers through the history of the various doctrinal crises and disputes—Docetist, Patripassianist, Arian, Nestorian—that prompted the most accomplished theologians of the patristic period to produce ever more sophisticated reflections upon the relation between Christ's humanity and his divinity. It would be difficult, in all likelihood, for anyone to read these pages without recognizing that both the patristic refinements of the teaching of divine impassibility and the patristic insistence upon the necessity of such a teaching were anything but an attempt to mitigate the "scandal" of Christ's passion or in any way to weaken or deny the full humanity of

the Incarnate Word. Rather, the traditional doctrine of God's *apatheia* was the only (logically, biblically, or doctrinally) coherent way of affirming the reality of the incarnation, the truth of human salvation in Christ, the totality of the sacrifice made by the divine Son upon the cross, the absolute integrity of Christ's humanity and divinity, and—not insignificantly—the teaching that God is infinite love.

I can see little in the way of legitimate complaint to make against Gavrilyuk's book. For all its brevity, it deserves to be called magisterial, and there are few other treatments of the topic comparably admirable in their combination of reasoned reflection and scrupulous scholarship. The only cavil I have with the book is that Gavrilyuk chooses to conclude his study with Cyril of Alexandria; as he himself acknowledges, he might very well have continued with his narrative at least up through the time of Maximus the Confessor. Maximus's exquisitely subtle reflections on the relation of the divine and human wills in Christ bring the entire issue of the sufferings of the impassible God to a new level of theological profundity and, in a sense, "complete the picture." But that is a small criticism of a book that deserves to be recommended without reservation.

DAVID B. HART, *University of St. Thomas.*

CROUTER, RICHARD. *Friedrich Schleiermacher: Between Enlightenment and Romanticism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xi + 277 pp. \$80.00 (cloth).

Richard Crouter has brought together the fruits of twenty-five years of his Schleiermacher scholarship in this rich and suggestive collection. Eleven essays, most of which have previously appeared, are organized under three rubrics. "Taking the Measure of Schleiermacher" begins with a provocative essay inviting readers to reconsider Wilhelm Dilthey's claim that understanding Schleiermacher's life is crucial for understanding his works. The remainder of this first section consists of studies of Schleiermacher in relation to Moses Mendelssohn, G. W. F. Hegel, and Søren Kierkegaard. Part 2, "Signposts of a Public Theologian," considers Schleiermacher's stance on the emancipation of Prussia's Jews and his pedagogical proposals in connection with the founding of the University of Berlin; a third essay revisits the debate about Schleiermacher as a cultural accommodationist. The concluding section, "Textual Readings and Milestones," investigates the theory of language in *On Religion* (Cambridge, 1988), the "shaping of an academic discipline" in the *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology* (Louisville, KY, 1966), the revisions undertaken in the second edition of *The Christian Faith* (Edinburgh, 1928), and the importance of the history of reception in assessing *On Religion*.

These essays arose over a span of twenty-five years, yet the collection exhibits great cohesiveness. Two motifs tie the essays together. The first is signaled by the book's subtitle: *Between Enlightenment and Romanticism*. Many of the essays touch upon the ways in which Schleiermacher's thought is related to both movements. Contrary to those scholars who find Romanticism to be a passing phase in Schleiermacher's thought, Crouter defends the thesis that romantic concerns persist throughout his career. The case is most fully developed in "Schleiermacher's Theory of Language: The Ubiquity of a Romantic Text," which argues that the theory of language first adumbrated in *On Religion* pervades Schleiermacher's dogmatic and hermeneutical works. The essay on Schleiermacher and Mendelssohn shows both figures to be engaged with issues posed by the Enlightenment.

The essay on Schleiermacher's pedagogical reflections situates his thought in relation to the Romantics' struggle with the ideal of the Enlightenment university. In the end Schleiermacher's relationship to Enlightenment and Romanticism is not so much "between" as incorporating both.

The second source of unity resides in what Crouter calls his own "predilection for viewing the world of religious and philosophical reflection through an historical lense" (10). This predilection cashes out as a consistent method: to contextualize Schleiermacher's work because "Schleiermacher's thought cannot be understood apart from his cultural setting" (2). Although Crouter speaks of his work as walking "a tightrope that stretches between history and theology" (22), the balance leans more to the historical and hermeneutical than to the theological side: these essays are more intellectual and cultural history than they are historical theology, more concerned with the interpretive task than with assessing the theological significance, enduring or otherwise, of Schleiermacher's corpus. Crouter insists upon the importance of intertextuality in interpreting Schleiermacher's works. The contribution of intertextual readings is ably demonstrated in Crouter's examination of the revisions in the second edition of *The Christian Faith*: he conclusively shows that, despite the enthusiasm of some interpreters for the first edition, the second edition is clearer, more consistent, and more faithful to Schleiermacher's intentions.

The contribution of this collection to Schleiermacher scholarship resides in its originality and suggestiveness. That Kierkegaard found in Schleiermacher's "literary strategies" a "model for indirect communication" (117–18), that Schleiermacher's political stance is best understood as "Burkean conservatism" (187), and that Mendelssohn and Schleiermacher, despite their differences, "have striking affinities" (65) are just three examples of these pervasive qualities. This is not to say that Crouter is entirely persuasive in all of his more provocative claims. In inviting readers to reconsider Dilthey's thesis, Crouter puts forward the strong claim that "biographical insight into lives is indispensable as a hermeneutical tool" (36). But is this claim true? In investigating the Hegel-Schleiermacher relationship, Crouter uncovers several biographical complexities: although Schleiermacher supported Hegel's call to Berlin, fearing the hegemony of Hegelian philosophy he opposed his admission to the Prussian Academy of Sciences; moreover, the two clashed publicly over the dismissal of W. L. de Wette from the University of Berlin. Undoubtedly such details illuminate the animus underlying Hegel's famous quip about Schleiermacher's theology (i.e., that a "dog would be the best Christian," cited on 91), but are they crucial for coming to terms with the systematic issues at stake between Hegel and Schleiermacher? That I am skeptical on that score by no means lessens my hope that Cambridge will soon be forthcoming with an affordable paperback edition of this important and thought-provoking volume.

WALTER E. WYMAN JR., *Whitman College*.

SMITH, J. WARREN. *Passion and Paradise: Human and Divine Emotion in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa*. New York: Crossroad, 2004. x+291 pp. \$39.95 (paper).

Based on a Yale dissertation, this volume is an excellent study of human emotions and their transformations in Gregory of Nyssa's spirituality. J. Warren Smith poses searching theological questions and brings Gregory into a stimu-

lating theological conversation with the Greek philosophical traditions and his Jewish and Christian forebears. Building on recent studies by Mark Hart, John Behr, Rowan Williams—and, I would add, Martin Laird—Smith makes a strong case for the positive role of emotions, especially desire, in Gregory's understanding of human identity, virtues, sanctification, and, indeed, the eschaton. The central core of the book is a lucid and convincing description of the Cappadocian's mystical theology, a dialectical spiral in which purification, illumination, and mystagogy lead into eternal growth in God. For Gregory, light and darkness, enjoyment, and ever-renewed desire combine as in each moment the soul truly knows and participates in God yet also stretches out toward what lies beyond. Smith effectively refutes the misreading of Gregory's mysticism as an exclusively apophatic quest involving eternally unfulfilled longing.

Smith notes that Gregory is philosophically and theologically eclectic and unsystematic yet builds a synthetic interpretation of his anthropology. Drawing on Johannes Zachhuber, he argues that Aristotelian rather than Platonic elements are central; that is, the Cappadocian understands the human as a microcosm created as both soul and body to unite the intelligible and sense-perceptible worlds. Further, he states that Gregory sees the soul as trichotomous, incorporating vegetative, sentient, and intellectual functions as Aristotle said and argues that Gregory uses the Platonic tripartite soul—intelligence, assertiveness, and desire—as a metaphor to speak of the soul's activities, not distinct “faculties” or “parts” within it. This foundation allows Smith to affirm that embodiment and emotions, which humans share with nonrational animals, belong intrinsically to human nature and serve necessary, positive purposes. For Gregory, anger and related emotions ultimately play an instrumental role, while desire is fundamental. Emotions are often misdirected into destructive “passions,” but when used rightly they become virtues; these, in turn, are important aspects of the divine likeness for which humans are created. Smith explains the troubling passage in the dialogue *On the Soul and the Resurrection* in which Macrina describes emotions as “warts” on the soul that are extrinsic to true human identity and will disappear in the eschaton by showing how this position is superseded within the give-and-take of the dialogue itself and drops away in Gregory's more mature works, the *Life of Moses* and the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*.

The book is partly a descriptive historical study and partly a speculative theological synthesis of Gregory's thought. In the concluding chapter, Smith suggests a speculative synthesis that combines the eschatological love of the dialogue with Macrina and the ontology of desire in the *Commentary on the Song* to affirm an eternal role for human desire in the “soaring stasis” of *epektasis*. This position, in my view, remains very close to Gregory's own thought. The book's main weakness lies in earlier speculative syntheses, particularly in the areas of protology and eschatology, that are not named as such but at times go beyond evidence in the texts. At times, these syntheses dismiss texts that do not fit as “metaphorical” or ascribe to Gregory arguments that derive from the conversation Smith constructs between him and other thinkers such as Plato or Origen. At these points, the narrative slides imperceptibly from history into systematic theology. This is fascinating material, but it should have been named as Smith's reflection, not Gregory's.

Let me briefly note three specific areas for improvement. First, the discussion of gender (39–47) would have benefited from clear distinctions between literal uses of gender language that refer to human ontology and figurative

uses that refer to characteristics belonging to all humans that are culturally identified as masculine or feminine. Next, Smith portrays the vision of God as intellectual apprehension that satisfies and evokes curiosity, like the ongoing discoveries of a happy scholar, though for Gregory it surely entails an immediate, nondiscursive perception of the divine. Finally, Smith's claim that Gregory advocates a traducianist understanding of the soul's origin (140–47) is especially problematic; it is probably anachronistic and needs to be carefully reconsidered through a close reading of Gregory's texts. However, none of these points undercuts the book's thesis or the central arguments that support it. Smith's analyses also abound in practical insights about emotions and ways of transforming them in the process of sanctification.

NONNA VERNA HARRISON, *Saint Paul School of Theology*.

SLONE, D. JASON. *Theological Incorrectness: Why Religious People Believe What They Shouldn't*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. ix+156 pp. \$29.95 (cloth).

Drawing on a developing literature in the cognitive science of religion (Stewart Guthrie, Pascal Boyer, Thomas Lawson, Robert McCauley, Harvey Whitehouse, and Justin Barrett), D. Jason Slone has written one of the most accessible books of this emerging field. Cognitive theorists of religion make considerable and controversial claims, such as being able to "explain" religious beliefs and ritual behaviors or to pave a way through the modernist (religions express universal human characteristics)/postmodernist (religions are unique cultural-linguistic systems) impasse. Its occasionally exuberant rhetoric aside, the cognitive science of religion is most helpfully understood as arguing (per Dan Sperber's work on mind and culture) that certain repeatable features across human cultures can best be explained by the evolved cognitive architecture of the human mind. Fortunately, the speculative work is being supplemented by an increasing number of empirical studies that are solidifying and nuancing its predictive claims. Slone's book serves as a kind of primer on cognitive science and religion while focusing on one of its more interesting observations: the tendency of religious people to believe in things that their traditions officially say they shouldn't.

From a religious point of view, there are many different kinds of theological incorrectness: idiosyncratic belief, catechism ignorance, intentional heresy, and sheer disbelief. Slone's book is not about these. Rather, it explores the common distinction between what believers profess in more reflective, official, or public moments and how their minds actually tend to work in everyday settings. For example, a god may be professed as omnipresent but then actually described as first being here and then over there, or what otherwise would be interpreted as a random coincidence may be explained as a miracle if it is highly salient or unusual. The term "theological incorrectness" is borrowed from Barrett to name just this feature of religious cognition. Slone's exploration of this phenomenon is both insightful and interesting, although it trades on a rather too simplistic notion of theology as primarily a deductive mental process (moving from an authority or experience to doctrine to application). Everyday religious thought, by contrast, is mostly abductive (moving from a personally salient event of unknown cause to attribution of divine causation). Such abductive thinking is more efficient and practical than deductive thought. It rides on our intuitive, or folk, understandings of our social and

natural environments. Our active minds are tuned to interpret the world as full of agency and thus tend to see the work of gods, ghosts, or demons afoot when our natural explanations fail, and often despite our more logical beliefs. In a helpful analogy, Slone notes that even those who know that earth's revolutions are responsible for the movement of the sun across the sky still tend to talk as if the earth is steady and the sun itself rises and sets. The difficulty with this argument is that it is hard to know if the person who judges that the sun is rising has momentarily forgotten what she or he has learned about the solar system or simply employed a mental shortcut (heuristic) to speed up information processing and simplify communication. Conceivably, one's belief in the scientific account of the sun or, for that matter, of an orthodox account of a god can be so thoroughly ingrained (preloaded) in one's mental schema that the use of the linguistic shortcut is simply a matter of convenience, not a lapse. So while the cognitivist's account of theological incorrectness is surely part of the story, it is not the whole story of how we intuit god activity or create new religious ideas.

This book is sensitive to this concern. Unlike some cognitivist accounts of religion, there is a modesty born from a broader reading of the study of religion (Slone teaches religious studies at Webster University in St. Louis). Notably, the first two chapters are treatments of the history of the study of religion. Chapter 1 reviews the competing camps of scientific naturalists and the defenders of transcendence. Chapter 2 critiques the overly simplistic "standard social science model" of culture as an objective and determining reality, as well as the theoretical dead end of the postmodern rejection of universal treatments of religion. It defends the cognitive science of religion as a "neo-modernist" (post-postmodernist?) study of religion that insists there are, among the differences, also widespread similarities in religious beliefs and practices and that these are best explained by the way the human mind works. This is a significant methodological claim that, arguably, could have been treated in a separate and more substantial study. The third chapter is simply the best concise overview to date of the fifteen-year progress of the cognitive science of religion for anyone who is new to this literature and should be required reading for courses in the psychology of religion. Chapter 4 deals with the immediate objection made to any theory of religion that assumes all religions involve supernatural beings: Theravada Buddhism. Attacking this issue head-on gives Slone the chance to lay the claim of Buddhist exceptionalism to rest as well as to define more carefully what he means by theological incorrectness. Chapter 5, "W.D.G.D? (What does God do?)," treats the perennial religious struggle between a belief in divine sovereignty and the ordinary intuition of human freedom, using colonial Puritan Calvinism as a case study. Slone argues that strong Calvinistic doctrine was hamstrung by its nonintuitive nature. It was inevitably challenged and replaced by the more "cognitively optimal" Arminian affirmation of human free will preached in the Great Awakening. In a Darwinian struggle between two religious ideas, it was the one that spurred the most practical inferences and best suited our everyday conceptual schemes that thrived. Within the limits of this case study, the argument makes sense, although it could have been strengthened with specific historical examples or more attention to European theological debates. Chapter 6 deals with the persistence even among the faithful of theologically incorrect luck beliefs—superstitions, destiny, and horoscopes—despite their repudiation both by science and most official theologies.

Slone's conclusion is that religion itself and the tendency for theological incorrectness are natural products of our evolved mind, making it essential that religious scholars pay new attention to the human sciences and their potential to renew comparative religious study. It is a persuasive argument set in a thoughtful, well-constructed, and lively book. It should work well in the classroom and be a good introduction for anyone interested in the increasingly important cognitivist account of religion.

CLIFTON F. GUTHRIE, *Bangor Theological Seminary*.

BECKER, MATTHEW L. *The Self-Giving God and Salvation History: The Trinitarian Theology of Johannes von Hofmann*. New York: T&T Clark International, 2004. xxix+287 pp. \$39.95 (paper).

Matthew Becker's sympathetic but not uncritical analysis of the famous Erlangen theologian Johannes von Hofmann is a very fine piece of historical theology. The Erlangen school, with its connotations of Lutheran confession-alism and conservative repristination, does not get a lot of space on the syllabi of American seminaries and divinity schools. But Becker presents us with a masterful theological mind wrestling with issues that remain on the contemporary theological agenda.

One of those issues at the top of the agenda is biblical criticism—the problem of history. Hofmann, who as a student in Berlin was more impressed with Ranke than with either Schleiermacher or Hegel, dives straight into this thicket. Central to his thought is the concept of the Christian *Tatbestand*, which Becker translates as “present factual situation.” The *Tatbestand* is an immediate experience of sin and redemption—this is what marks Hofmann as a member of the Erlangen school (as well as his teaching at the University of Erlangen from 1838 to 1842 and 1845 to 1877). From this experience the theologian can discern the narrative shape of history and events of transhistorical significance. Hofmann fends off the charge—leveled at Schleiermacher as well—of being a theologian of consciousness (the German *Ich-Theologe* sounds far more insulting) with his claim that personal experience is mediated through the historical community of the church and the record left in Scripture. One would not have this experience without baptism into a community shaped by Scripture. Nonetheless, the experience allows the theologian a certain freedom over against the community's creeds and wooden readings of Scripture. The theologian is confident in his or her claims because of personal experience, but this experience is decentered and mediated, and it has left historical tracks discernible with the best of modern historical method.

Reflection on this experience and the conditions for its possibility leads Hofmann to argue that God's eternal being is self-differentiated—because God loves (as evident from the *Tatbestand*), God willed Godself to be triune, both eternally and in history. This hints at the identification of immanent and economic trinity made by Rahner and Kasper (147). If there is a central theme to this rich book, it is that the common wisdom that Trinitarian thinking waned between Schleiermacher and Barth is belied by Hofmann, who foreshadows much current Trinitarian interest and ought to be used as a major resource for it.

Hofmann was criticized by fellow conservative Lutherans for his doctrine of Atonement. He argued that God was essentially love and so did not need a vicarious atonement to love humanity. God is angry, historically, but the life

and death of Jesus are an expression of this love that restores community with humans, rather than a payment of debt.

Hofmann's kenotic christology grapples with the problem of traditional teaching on the two natures of Christ that, in the wake of nineteenth-century expressivist and psychological developmental theories of what it means to be fully human, was under unbearable stress. God so loved the world that God self-limited God's self ("poured out" divine attributes) to become fully human. "The person of Christ does not unite the divine nature and the human nature in himself, as the Chalcedonian definition states; rather, Christ is the union of the divine person and human nature. Christ as 'person' is 'God'; Christ as 'nature' is 'human being'" (183–84). In the polemics that followed, Hofmann argued that traditional christologies are docetic, that they do not allow Christ full humanity, especially in the Passion (presumably a divine nature, expecting the resurrection, would not suffer as fully as you or I). He cited Luther against the orthodox Lutherans, which, as Claude Welch points out, inaugurates the era of modern Luther research (*Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972], 1:225).

Hofmann was often accused of separating secular history from a special sacred history (*Heilsgeschichte*). One great service Becker has provided is to bring into the discussion Hofmann's 1842 lectures on dogmatics and his large unfinished commentary on the New Testament, works not examined in the German secondary literature. Becker argues that Hofmann locates all history within the *Heilsgeschichte* the theologian perceives on the basis of the *Tatbestand*. Thus Hofmann anticipates certain recent developments in hermeneutics (the stance of the hermeneut), in addition to his anticipations of the Yale school (narrative) and contemporary Trinitarian thought. While Becker points out Hofmann's forerunner status, questions of influence or contemporary relevance are left to the reader.

Hans Schwarz, in his 2005 *Theology in Global Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), reiterates the view of Christian Preus that "it is regrettable . . . that 'whereas-in Germany, Hofmann is counted among the great theologians of the past [nineteenth] century, his name is almost unknown in the English-speaking world, and few of his books are found even in the libraries of the leading theological schools'" (86). Becker's study should ameliorate this, and his careful work merits a space on German bookshelves, too.

THEODORE VIAL, *Illiff School of Theology*.

BENBASSA, ESTHER, and ATTIAS, JEAN-CHRISTOPHE. *The Jew and the Other*. Translated by G. M. Goshgarian. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004. 176 pp. \$17.95 (paper).

In *The Jew and the Other* Esther Benbassa and Jean-Christophe Attias tackle what would seem to be an impossibly large topic, especially given the book's slight length of 157 pages. As the title suggests, the subject of the book is the relationship of Jews and Judaism to otherness. The authors pursue this theme in its multiple variants. Not only do they discuss the status of "the nations" or "the goyim" in Jewish history and sacred literature; they also use the general category of otherness as a means for raising topics such as the status of women in Judaism and the function of separation and distinction in Jewish dietary laws. In considering their subtopics, the authors' historical range is vast. In

one section, for example, the authors move within the span of five pages from a discussion of the book of Esther to a historical description of the Spanish Inquisition, and then onto Jean-Paul Sartre's 1946 essay "Portrait of the Anti-Semite" (111-16).

Benbassa and Attias control their abundance of material and their array of topics by organizing the book as "an improbable modern midrash" (xi). That is to say that the chapters are organized as loose commentaries on each of the five books of the Torah. Within each chapter, the discussions proceed as meditations on a handful of verses out of each of the five books. In each chapter the authors focus on how the separations and distinctions that are described or prescribed in the Pentateuch have been reproduced or reinterpreted in various historical contexts. The chapter on Genesis, for example, takes up God's otherness in relation to the human, woman's otherness in relation to man, and the Jew's sense of otherness in relation to himself. Genesis 1:27, "Male and female he created them," provides thus the impetus for a discussion of the ordination of women within the Orthodox tradition (17-25).

The payoffs of this approach are multiple. Benbassa and Attias are able to be highly synthetic and creative in their arguments as well as politically provocative. In an extended commentary on Deut. 25:17, "Bear in mind what Amalek did to you," The authors define the enemy in Jewish thought as the one with whom no compromise is possible. They illustrate how the language used in the Hebrew Bible to describe Amalek has increasingly been echoed since the 1973 Yom Kippur War in right-wing Israeli depictions of the Arab (122).

Impressively, the authors manage throughout the book to avoid lapsing into apologetics. The work is clearly engaged in illustrating the way that the West's view of the Jew as other has both shaped and been shaped by the status of otherness within Jewish sources, ancient and modern. But unlike some of their philosophical predecessors on this topic, Benbassa and Attias are not out to show that Judaism's mission has been to teach the nations how to love the stranger. While the command to love the *Ger* is highlighted as a central teaching of the Pentateuch, the authors consistently emphasize its dialectical relationship in the tradition with the notion that the other represents temptation and danger.

Despite the consistent concern to emphasize tensions within the tradition and to mark out historical changes, the work nonetheless suffers from its narrative tendencies. Given its broad scope, it is inevitable that the text must occasionally treat the Jew as a unified historical character. Benbassa and Attias often refer to "the Jew" or to "Israel" or to the "Zionist" as though they are easily circumscribed, easily characterizable personages with distinct motives and desires. While the authors do make an effort to describe the features of "the Jew" as he is understood by medieval Christians or late nineteenth-century anti-Semites, they also lapse into generalizations themselves. At one point, they describe the Jew . . . as "He" who "throws himself body and soul into the future," as "the one who enlightens his society" (7), and elsewhere they refer to the "unloved Jew . . . more or less condemned to hating himself" (129). While it is easy to understand this technique as a literary device allowing the authors to condense complex historical issues and moments into elegantly schematic paradigms, it is difficult not to sense how much must be overly simplified for the sake of their grand narrative, a narrative so sweeping in its scope

and yet selectively specific in its detail that one wonders to whom it is being told.

Benbassa and Attias are both scholars of Judaism at the École Pratique des Hautes Études and the Sorbonne, and it is helpful to understand their work within its French context. Though they do not focus on the place of the Jew within French history, many of the anecdotes chosen recall to the reader that Benbassa and Attias are writing as scholars of Judaism in France, writing to a nation that is culturally Catholic in its history, literature, and official calendar, to a public already familiar with Sartre's facile schematization of the Jew in his 1946 portrait of the Jew and the anti-Semite, and also to a Jewish populace that is now largely Sephardic but with a powerful Ashkenazic legacy. The cross-section of interested parties to whom the authors speak partially accounts for the fact that they relay basic facts about Judaism that might seem unnecessary to a Jewish academic audience, such as the origin of the holiday of Purim or the numerical requirement of a minyan, while also engaging the thought of Judah Ha-Levi and Hermann Cohen as though they are familiar and canonical thinkers for their readership. For an American reader, the book's interest may lie, at least partially, in what it conveys about the status of Judaism in French culture. Even without this element of interest though, the work remains an engaging and creative reflection on an issue that is of deep philosophical and historical significance: the function of identity and difference within Judaism and in Judaism's relationship to the Western world.

SARAH HAMMERSCHLAG, *Williams College*.

VRIES, HENT DE. *Minimal Theologies: Critiques of Secular Reason in Adorno and Levinas*. Translated by Geoffrey Hale. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. xxxiv+720 pp. \$24.95 (paper).

In *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), Jacques Derrida invokes the concept of the "instituted trace" to explain the structure of intelligibility implied by Saussure's theory of signs. For Derrida, the trace is that wherein "otherness is announced as such"; the "theological" he describes as "a determined moment in the total movement of the trace" (47). The latter claim is Hent de Vries' motto in *Minimal Theologies*, an investigation of how theology relates to rational discourse and deconstruction. Here de Vries analyzes what he calls the "diminishing and abiding intelligibility" of theology in the modern world. Though such a theme is not uncommon in contemporary philosophical discussions, there are a number of reasons why de Vries' efforts are significant. As the earliest of three books by de Vries on the status of the religious in the modern world (see also *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion* and *Religion and Violence*), *Minimal Theologies* importantly investigates key thematic similarities in the work of Emmanuel Levinas and Theodor Adorno. Yet what is perhaps most striking about the book is de Vries' audacious argument that a certain minimal or "micrological" (70) theology is not only unavoidable for rational discourse but serves as the benchmark for rationality itself.

This hefty tome is divided into four parts. An overview here is fitting, given the work's complexity. Part I is a critique of modern theology. Here, two questions drive the discussion. First, what remains of the traditional questions posed by classical theology once metaphysical speculation is rendered suspect? Second, what is theology's task, if demarcated from both modern empiricism

and metaphysical dogmatism? Habermas, de Vries tells us, is a good place to examine these questions, since his work is attentive both to the demands of rationality and to critiques of the Enlightenment project. In the final analysis, however, de Vries argues for the necessity of moving beyond Habermas's formal pragmatics. Inspired by Levinas, de Vries describes how philosophy must necessarily have recourse to what he calls the "ab-solute" (71) in treating those phenomena of concrete lived experience that escape conceptuality. A minimal theology is a discourse that neither fixes the elusive "ab-solute" in metaphysical terms nor reduces it to empirical reality; rather, it assigns the "ab-solute" "quasi-transcendental" status and thereby respects the way in which the "ab-solute" contests philosophy's tendency toward exhaustive conceptual interpretation.

The heart of the book, parts 2 and 3, situates Levinas and Adorno in relation to one another. It is the mark of de Vries' creativity and erudition that he constructs this comparison without sacrificing specificity. The approach to Adorno is both historical and philosophical. Adorno's early attempt to develop a "negativistic philosophy of history" (chap. 3) and the reformulation of Enlightenment rationality during his middle period are interpreted in light of what de Vries describes as the later Adorno's radicalization of the prohibition of images. Arguing against the view that Adorno is neo-Hegelian, de Vries describes how Adorno's "dialectical critique of dialectics" (529) is able to respect the "singular, the nonidentical, the different . . . as the irretrievable and irrevocable other" (280). Thus, the philosophical notion of the "ab-solute" gains specificity through the reading of Adorno: not only must philosophy resist the Hegelian drive toward totality but it must do so through a certain gesture of speculation without verifying the "ab-solute" in some metaphysical beyond.

Negative dialectic's capacity to respect difference provides the basis for comparison with Levinas. The approach to Levinas is sober and original. Drawing upon the views of the later Adorno, for example, de Vries offers a thought-provoking discussion of Levinas's position on art. Yet at times de Vries risks pushing the structural analogy between Levinas and Adorno too far—when, for example, he casts the Levinasian "trace of the other" as easily leading "to misunderstanding unless one reads it as meaning a subtle form of dialectical speculation" (479). One wonders which definition of speculation is invoked here, seeing that the book offers little evidence that Levinas describes the trace in this way.

Whereas comparing Adorno and Levinas may shed new light upon the story of twentieth-century philosophy's fascination with theological discourse, it is de Vries' thesis that a minimal theology is "rational in an emphatic sense" (72) that most commands attention. How are we to understand this idea, which seems to re-instate theology as foundational discourse?

I suspect that this view of the theological is predicated, in *Minimal Theologies*, upon a more or less structuralist understanding of deconstruction, which ironically de Vries himself criticizes in the book's appendix. Recall the book's motto, above. Does Derrida mean by this that the "theological," even if minimal, is really a necessary, structural component of rationality? In fact, the sentence directly preceding the motto in *Of Grammatology* indicates precisely the opposite: the trace "is not theological, as one might believe somewhat hastily" (47). Thus, when de Vries invokes this passage to justify his project, he must assume that "determined moment" means something like "a structurally irre-

ducible element." He thereby risks disregarding an essential distinction in Derrida's early philosophy. To what extent the same holds true for his reading of Adorno and Levinas, readers must decide for themselves. The issue is crucial for contemporary philosophical discussions, which is why *Minimal Theologies* deserves to be examined with care.

RYAN COYNE, *Williamstown, MA*.

SCELLENBERG, J. L. *Prolegomena to a Philosophy of Religion*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005. 226 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).

J. L. Schellenberg professes two goals for this book. He intends it, first, as the grounding for his own future work in the philosophy of religion and, second, as a discussion of prolegomena relevant to the direction of the field as a whole. Although his discussion reframes several classic questions in the philosophy of religion in a way that does suggest a promising program of further inquiry, the success of the first goal can be judged only by the eventual unfolding of Schellenberg's larger project. Therefore, my main interest in this review will be the second goal. In service of this goal, he analyzes and defines a number of epistemological concepts important in the philosophy of religion, such as belief, disbelief, skepticism, and faith, and offers normative proposals regarding the proper aims and evaluative principles of the field. Many of these topics have been widely discussed, and Schellenberg develops his views in continuity with some of these discussions. L. Jonathan Cohen, William Alston, and Richard Swinburne are his most central conversation partners. For the most part, though, Schellenberg is guided by his own creative and meticulous analysis of ordinary religious language. The book is full of thoughtful examples and arguments and makes several valuable advances in contemporary debates about the epistemology of religion.

In the first chapter, Schellenberg offers his definition of religion, or, more precisely, his two definitions: one general definition and one suited especially to philosophy of religion. In both cases, he rejects the popular family resemblance approach to defining religion and attempts instead to identify its necessary and sufficient conditions. The definitions build on Paul Tillich's well-known conception of faith as ultimate concern. For Schellenberg, personal (as opposed to institutional) religion necessarily involves, roughly, a disposition to treat some transmundane reality as metaphysically and ethically ultimate. He deploys his definition throughout the book as he applies his general insights into the nature of belief, disbelief, skepticism, and faith to religious cases.

The chapters on belief and faith are particularly original. Schellenberg examines both "belief-that" and "belief-in" (or "propositional belief" and "affective belief," respectively). He argues that a propositional belief is simply a disposition to think about the world a certain way, or, alternatively, a disposition to apprehend a state of affairs "under the concept *reality*" (50). This view of propositional belief stands in opposition to the commonly held understanding of believing as assenting to a proposition. He also distinguishes propositional belief from the feeling of confidence that may accompany it, thereby rejecting the idea that beliefs (properly speaking) have degrees of strength. Schellenberg does accept the widespread view that propositional beliefs are causally determined by evidence (broadly construed) and therefore subjects entirely lack direct voluntary control of them. Affective belief for Schellenberg is a

disposition to experience "approving, trusting, and loyal emotions" toward the object of belief (69). Faith, like belief, has two distinctive types: faith-in and faith-that (or "operational faith" and "propositional faith," respectively). Having faith in something is not primarily a disposition to feel particular emotions toward it (like belief-in), but rather a disposition to act on an uncertain proposition in pursuit of some good goal. It is, essentially, a type of trust. Operational faith can be grounded either by religious beliefs or by the other type of faith, propositional faith. Propositional faith is, roughly, a favorable evaluation of the state of affairs reported by some proposition, without propositional belief in it, along with a policy of representing the world as including that state of affairs and assenting to the representation (139). Faith is not determined by evidence, and therefore, unlike belief, it is subject to direct voluntary control.

Schellenberg's analyses of these epistemological concepts are useful on their own, but they also lead him to some broader conclusions. He argues that the excessive focus on the justification of religious beliefs in the philosophy of religion has led philosophers to neglect the evaluation of other responses to religious propositions, particularly responses involving faith without belief. Schellenberg argues that careful attention to all of the important responses to religious propositions, along with careful reflections on how to evaluate them, would widen the conversation in the discipline in useful ways. Underscoring his point that evaluative debates in philosophy of religion are too narrow, he points out that no one has previously offered any principles to help determine whether different types of religious faith (as opposed to types of religious belief) are justified or not, and he attempts to offer some of his own. The unifying concept of justification that underlies its application to various objects, including states of persons, propositions, and responses to propositions, is that the object in question "*need not* be avoided" (181), because it is either a best (and therefore "negatively justified") or the best (and therefore "positively justified") option as compared to the available alternatives (198). Schellenberg further argues that the aims of philosophers of religion tend to be too narrow in another sense. Evaluations of the justification of religious persons, propositions, and responses should be seen not only as ends in themselves but also as means to the pursuit of three higher-level aims: (1) bringing justified religious claims to bear on broader philosophical questions for constructive purposes, (2) evaluating religious practices, and (3) seeking new conceptions of ultimate reality that are not present in any existing religions.

Precisely because Schellenberg departs from traditional conceptions of belief and faith, his analysis of these concepts is bound to inspire further reflection. For example, it is not immediately clear how his definition of belief as a form of thought apprehending some state of affairs as belonging to the world, or as real, can include beliefs about possible states of affairs. Regarding a different issue altogether, it might be useful to question his separation of propositional faith and propositional belief. Schellenberg admits that ordinary usage of religious language often implies (against his view) that faith requires belief, but he sees this usage as confused or inattentive to all of the different phenomena labeled by the term "faith" (150–51). Since he takes it that beliefs are involuntary and propositional faith is voluntary, Schellenberg insists that the latter cannot require the former. Perhaps, though, these uses of language could be accommodated by rejecting the dogma that all beliefs are involuntary. If belief is a form of thought apprehending some state of affairs as belonging

to the world, and propositional faith involves the act of representing the world as including a state of affairs and assenting to the representation, it seems possible to preserve Schellenberg's careful phenomenological distinctions by speaking of propositional faith as requiring "voluntary belief." A broader conception of the semantic range of the term "belief" would also do justice to ordinary language expressions such as "choosing to believe" or "deciding what to believe."

Schellenberg's *Prolegomena* is unmistakably analytic in its orientation and in its intended audience, and for this audience there is much of value in this excellent book. His sustained attention to the aims and principles of philosophy of religion helps to address a lack of ongoing self-reflection in the discipline. When he takes on topics that have been more extensively examined, his treatments are imaginative and provocative. This book should be widely read. RONNEY MOURAD, *Albion College*.

TURNER, DENYS. *Faith, Reason, and the Existence of God*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. xix+271 pp. \$29.99 (paper).

The contemporary theological scene has little use for natural theology. When it is not condemned as idolatrous, it is ignored as irrelevant, and few theologians would agree that a sound proof of the existence of God is possible, even in principle. Against this backdrop, Denys Turner's thesis is narrow yet bold. *Faith, Reason, and the Existence of God* argues that Christians should affirm, on the grounds of faith, that God's existence can be demonstrated using unaided human reason. Turner does not offer any such demonstration himself, nor does he comment on those offered by others. He even allows that, as an empirical matter, no successful proof may ever be discovered, and he rejects any supposition that faith somehow depends on reason. He claims only that, on the grounds of faith, we must say that demonstrating the existence of God is not impossible.

Turner holds that his thesis is best defended by Thomas Aquinas, and so he advances his case by engaging with Thomas on the nature of human reason, the nature of God, and the nature of proof. Turner's reading of Thomas is similar to that of Herbert McCabe, David Burrell, and Brian Davies, and over the course of the book, he opposes rival interpretations from Colin Gunton and John Milbank. On Turner's reading, the initial questions of the *Summa Theologiae* present a grammar of God talk that shows us what we can and cannot say about God, finally showing us that our talk about God stretches language beyond its breaking point, until we lose our grip on the meaning of our own words.

One might wonder how this sort of linguistic apophasis helps Turner's case. If we don't really know the meaning of words like "exists" and "causes" when we apply them to God, can we really demonstrate that God exists and causes the world to exist? Turner thinks that we can. Furthermore, he argues that it is precisely because we can demonstrate the unknowable "existence" of an unknowable "cause" that natural theology is not inherently idolatrous, for only such a demonstration could count as a demonstration of the God of Christian faith (226). Properly understood, this is a claim about the legitimacy of analogical speech about God. Turner, like Thomas, believes that robust theology demands analogy and that good philosophy allows it.

Throughout the book, but especially in the first section, Turner presents a theological vision of rationality that is dazzling and original. Against Enlightenment accounts that equate reason with discursive ratiocination, Turner retrieves a broader, Thomistic notion of reason as intellect, which can grasp some truths immediately and nondiscursively. Reason can transcend itself and can, "by the exercise of its distinctively natural capacity of reasoning . . . attain to a conclusion the meaning of which lies beyond any which could stand in a relation of univocity with the created order" (87). According to Turner, the self-transcendence of reason anticipates the apophatic and cataphatic structure of faith, which always grasps God both as present and absent, known and unknown. Each exercise of human reason "bears witness to a 'space' lying beyond its own powers to access" (118). Minimally, this means that reason is always self-transcendent because ratiocination presupposes a nondiscursive grasp of truths, such as the law of noncontradiction, that it cannot demonstrate (86). Less minimally, it means that we can intelligibly ask, but cannot intelligibly answer, the fundamental question of why there is something rather than nothing (chaps. 11 and 12).

Reason's dialectic, which mirrors the apophatic and cataphatic dialectic of faith, is also seen in the Eucharist, in which Christ is both really present and also really, because eschatologically, absent (67). Thus, the real structure of reason is "proto-sacramental," which is to say that it has "the shape of *Christ*, which is the shape of Christian *belief*, and so of Christian *theology*" (261). Throughout the book, Turner patiently unfolds the claim that unaided natural reason is protosacramental and that demonstrating the existence of God is its central and supreme activity (120). Even without the rest of his argument, Turner's affirmation of natural reason is a major contribution to contemporary theology.

Still, at various points, a certain kind of reader—among whom I number myself—will long for a straightforward philosophical argument that analogical terms really can play the role that Turner needs them to play. We need some reassurance that they can function in valid proofs, that we can form true statements with them even when we don't know what they mean, and that we can use them to distinguish between an unknowable God about whom we can say nothing univocal, on the one hand, and sheer nothing, about which we can also say nothing univocal, on the other. Turner answers these kinds of objections in the book's final section. I often found myself relieved that he aired my most pressing objections but frustrated that he dismissed them too quickly. It is fair to say that he will not convince a determined opponent on philosophical grounds alone. Nor does he really try, since this is a work of theology and not philosophy of language.

The most important claim in this section is that, logically, "if an argument for the existence of God is to succeed, it cannot depend upon analogy: it must demonstrate analogy" (207). According to Turner, we must first demonstrate that God is the cause of all things. To be sure, the word "cause" will be used analogically in the conclusion of such an argument, but this should not trouble us, since there is no general logical restriction on reasoning to a conclusion that employs analogical terms (211, citing W. V. O. Quine and Peter Geach). So, with such a proof, we will have shown that there is a cause of everything that is not like any intraworldly cause and yet is also not unlike any intraworldly cause—and yet is therefore a "cause" at all only in some sense that we do not understand. Only God could answer to such a description: *et hoc dicimus Deum*.

Could there be such a proof? I suppose I can't rule it out, and that is all that Turner tries to show in this wonderful book.

WILLIAM D. WOOD, *Chicago, Illinois*.

MOYN, SAMUEL. *Origins of the Other: Emmanuel Levinas between Revelation and Ethics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005. xi+268 pp. \$29.99 (cloth).

In "Violence and Metaphysics," the first major critical response to Emmanuel Levinas's *Totality and Infinity*, Jacques Derrida refers to Levinas's thought as the "trial of theology" (Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978], 83). Samuel Moyn's outstanding and audacious new book, *Origins of the Other: Emmanuel Levinas between Revelation and Ethics*, returns us to this trial. In Moyn's version, however, Levinas is not the prosecutor but the defendant. As an intellectual historian, Moyn's task is to illustrate that the true historical origins of Levinas's concept of alterity lie, to the surprise of many, not in the biblical and rabbinic teachings of Judaism or in Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology, but rather in the Protestant theology of the Weimar period. More precisely, Moyn argues that Levinas owes his model of transcendence to Karl Barth—and thus ultimately to Kierkegaard—and that consequently, despite Levinas's insistent claims to the contrary, his philosophy amounts to cryptotheology.

In making this claim Moyn takes on the hordes of Levinas disciples who read Levinas, as Moyn puts it, with the kind of "devotion ordinarily reserved for religious belief" (13). Moyn contests the two main camps of interpretation that have grown up in the wake of Levinas's rise to prominence, each of which derives its positions from Levinas's own (potentially conflicting) characterizations of his thought. The first camp assumes that Levinas's philosophy can be read as a purely secular ethics, independent of any religious tradition; the second, that Levinas's philosophy is Judaic in spirit, borrowing heavily from the rabbinic tradition with which it is often assumed Levinas had a lifelong engagement.

In offering his counternarrative of the origins of Levinas's thought, Moyn does not merely contest the above descriptions; he reconstructs them to show how they developed and to argue compellingly that they inadequately account for Levinas's concept of alterity. It is in this reconstruction that Moyn makes his greatest scholarly contributions. He traces Levinas's route through phenomenology in great detail, offering an in-depth account of the major questions driving Husserlian phenomenology, a fair characterization of Heidegger's retooling of the field, and a compelling account of Levinas's captivity with Heidegger. Moyn reveals through this account that the problem of the Other was clearly an issue of great concern for early readers of both Husserl and Heidegger and that it was clearly not Levinas's concern in his early engagement with the thinkers. Ultimately, when Levinas did arrive at his own philosophy of the Other, Moyn argues that it was to the religious accounts of revelation—in a trajectory that leads from Kierkegaard to Barth and from Barth to Rosenzweig—that he turned.

Levinas's indebtedness to Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption* is well known, and in recent years Rosenzweig and Levinas have appeared as the twinned stars guiding modern Jewish thought. As Moyn points out, however, the influence of Rosenzweig on Levinas is far more fraught than is often assumed. The same

can be said for Levinas's relationship to Judaism. One of the most important correctives that Moyn's book offers is to the reading of Levinas that understands him as translating the great ethical truths of Judaism into the language of philosophy. Armed with facts that are widely known if little discussed, Moyn argues that Levinas's conception of Judaism is best understood as Levinas's own invention tailored to suit his philosophical needs.

The crux of Moyn's argument is to claim that Levinas's model of alterity "translates" a Christian theological model into an ethical one, making his philosophy thus dependent on theology. "Infinite qualitative difference, a theological principle, is not gone; it remains in its interiorized form in the human realm. And so, historically at least, Levinas's ethics are caught up in a constitutive contradiction: encrypting a theology they also abjure," writes Moyn (256). Moyn concludes consequently that Levinas fails to provide us with a secular ethics free from a theological foundation.

Though there are certainly grounds for arguing that Levinas's model of transcendence does not break free from a theological context (and both Derrida and Maurice Blanchot made such a claim in the early sixties), it is important to recognize that Levinas's own resistance to theology was not a rejection of the "theo" but of the "logos." That Levinas depended on a theological model to articulate the dynamics of intersubjectivity is, of course, incontestable. Levinas unashamedly admits this. He constructs his model of intersubjectivity by way of an analogy with Descartes' "idea of infinity." What is the difference between Levinas's analogy and Moyn's notion of translation? For Levinas this analogy is the only path out of Kierkegaard's solipsism. Thus the transition from theology to ethics that Moyn highlights as cryptotheology for Levinas constituted his challenge to theology. Because Moyn's method is primarily historical, the confrontation between Levinas's philosophical model of transition and Moyn's own historical version is not staged in *Origins of the Other*. We are left thus with two trials, and the question remains at the end of the book whether Levinas would have considered Moyn's challenge as a threat.

SARAH HAMMERSCHLAG, *Williams College*.

ARNOLD, DAN. *Buddhists, Brahmins, and Belief: Epistemology in South Asian Philosophy of Religion*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. viii+318 pp. \$49.50 (cloth).

Dan Arnold's study of epistemology in South Asian philosophy of religion is commendable for three reasons: its clarity, its content, and its innovation. With grace and precision, the author guides the reader into the heart of Indian philosophical debate, epistemology, while skillfully employing analytical tools from contemporary philosophy in order to illuminate the views of ancient Indian philosophers. The result is a thoroughly stimulating read for anyone interested in Indian, Buddhist, or cross-cultural philosophy.

Arnold's is a study in three parts. "Part I: Buddhist Foundationalism" examines the theories of two monumental Buddhist epistemologists, Dignāga (ca. 480–540 CE) and Dharmakīrti (ca. 600–660 CE). "Part II: The Reformed Epistemology of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā" looks at a response to these Buddhist thinkers by members of the orthodox Brahmanical school Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, focusing particularly on the ideas of Pārthasārathimīśra (fl. ca. 1075). "Part III: The Metaphysical Argu-

ments of Madhyamaka" details what Arnold sees as the Buddhist philosopher Candrakīrti's critique of Dignāga's foundational epistemology.

Arnold's tripartite structure and choice of topics are praiseworthy not only for focusing attention on the centrality of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti for Buddhist philosophy but also for addressing their impact on the larger debates within Indian philosophy. His discussion of Dharmakīrti adds to the growing body of recent scholarship on this important Buddhist thinker by George Dreyfus (*Recognizing Reality: Dharmakīrti's Philosophy and Its Tibetan Interpretations* [Albany, NY, 1997]), Tom Tillemans (*Scripture, Logic, Language: Essays on Dharmakīrti and His Tibetan Successors* [Boston, 1999]), and John Dunne (*Foundations of Dharmakīrti's Philosophy* [Boston, 2004]). Arnold depicts Dignāga and Dharmakīrti's project as a type of foundationalism similar to the modern empiricists' attempt to ground knowledge in sense data (34). This reading will likely spark some debate among specialists (for a different view of Dharmakīrti, see Dunne, 323–24). Arnold's careful examination of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, a rather neglected and misunderstood school of Indian philosophy, offers the best reading of Pārthasārathi's realist position as an attack on the Buddhist epistemologists' ideas about truth and justification. It is to be hoped that the author's interpretation will cause scholars of Indian philosophy to pay more attention to the arguments of this school. Arnold's analysis of Candrakīrti in Part III is the most innovative section of the book and will no doubt generate controversy among researchers of Madhyamaka philosophy.

Arnold's argument in Part III focuses on his interpretation of a section in the first chapter of Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā*. Against some other contemporary readings, Arnold maintains (144) that Candrakīrti's critique in this section of an "unnamed interlocutor" is a specific attack on Dignāga. Arnold neatly summarizes (161) the difference between the two thinkers as one revolving around the concept of "unique particulars" (*svalakṣaṇa*). For Dignāga, entities such as selves and medium-sized dry goods are reducible to objective, irreducible *svalakṣaṇas*. Unique particulars therefore provide an epistemic foundation upon which to ground our knowledge. Candrakīrti, on the other hand, asserts that in order to be consistent with the Buddhist commitment to dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*), one can never reach irreducible objects that are not themselves dependently originated. Arnold interprets Candrakīrti's position as standing midway between epistemology and ontology (162). In other words, our linguistic and epistemic conventions "do not represent an independent, internally coherent perspective on reality; rather, they constitute an *example of* (and are thus involved with) reality" (163). As Arnold admits, this amounts to a realist reading of Madhyamaka (171). Moreover, Arnold maintains that Candrakīrti presents this realism in the form of an a priori, transcendental argument. Simply stated, this is the assertion that the only "ultimate truth" is the fact that there is nothing fundamentally different from the world as conventionally described (172). Thus it is impossible to offer any explanation of anything that does not itself display the one a priori truth about the world: everything is dependently originated.

In his concluding section, Arnold champions a realist conception of truth that maintains the logical independence of truth from justification as an approach for religious studies (215). Unsurprisingly, this appeal to realism echoes the author's interpretation of Madhyamaka. Here we witness the hermeneutical dilemma common in contemporary readings of ancient Indian phi-

losophers: does Arnold offer the best reading of Candrakīrti or the reading that best supports his own views? I leave it to the reader to decide.

DOUGLAS OSTO, *Massey University*.

WEITHMAN, PAUL J. *Religion and the Obligations of Citizenship*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. xi+227 pp. \$55.00 (cloth); \$34.99 (paper).

Paul J. Weithman's work is a thorough and disciplined analysis of the ethics of citizenship and the communities and concerns that animate political participation in democracies. It will reward the specialist in particular, and it presents an engagement between social scientific research on political participation, on the one hand, and philosophical analysis of democratic theory, on the other. The book has a twofold agenda: first, to marshal social scientific research to show how religion funds citizenship as an achievement (i.e., a status to be acquired through the accumulation of certain skills) and, second, to critique a "standard approach" characteristic of liberal democratic theory that argues that political arguments must meet some threshold of accessibility. Weithman, in short, finds the latter attempt to be incoherent and essentially fruitless in that it articulates an ideal with no practical traction for real decisions.

Weithman's early discussion assesses recent research on how religious communities equip individuals with the tools of citizenship and the disposition to engage in citizenship's activities (see Sydney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995]). Weithman argues that Verba and his colleagues demonstrate a correlation between voting and religious participation, that churches present distinct civic benefits for disadvantaged groups, and that they provide an experience of participation and voluntarism that equip citizens with resources for civic argument. Weithman writes, "By fostering civic skills and self-confidence, they encourage citizens' effective identification with their citizenship. It is safe to assume that when churches mobilize or give political cues to citizens, churches also give them religious reasons for action and arm them with religious political arguments" (48). Weithman here invites an interesting line of questioning to assess what happens between the first and second sentence of that quote. Church communities with drastically different political orientations, even churches who intend to be apolitical or an alternative to politics, impart citizenship skills.

Weithman follows this by arguing that, across a range of conceptions of democracy, excluding religious sources from participation and argument presents undesirable consequences: "To maintain that citizens should not engage in political action solely for religious reasons is to require these citizens to withdraw from democratic politics, or at least from political involvement on the issue in question. To maintain that churches should not be engaged in politics is, in effect, to require that they not facilitate the realized citizenship of large numbers of Americans" (65). Weithman argues that removing religious arguments and frameworks from the resources available to citizens robs American democracy of its primary source of responsible, equal citizenship.

The latter half of the book is devoted to arguing for two central principles for citizens' political practice. First, citizens of a liberal democracy may base their votes on reasons drawn from their comprehensive moral views, including their religious views, without having other reasons that are sufficient for their

vote—provided they sincerely believe that their government would be justified in adopting the measures they vote for. Second, citizens of a liberal democracy may offer arguments in public political debate that depend upon reasons drawn from their comprehensive moral views, including their religious views, without making them good by appeal to other arguments—provided they believe that their government would be justified in adopting the measures they favor and are prepared to indicate what they think would justify the adoption of the measures (121).

Weithman defends these proposals and their implications by contrasting them with two versions of “the standard approach” presented by John Rawls and by Robert Audi. The essence of the argument against them is that they cannot succeed in providing a coherent account of religiously neutral or rationally accessible political discourse, or at least one that is useful in practical political argument, because they cannot specify a coherent relationship between their ideal conception and decision making in real democracies. Weithman also finds disputes about accessibility inevitably intractable. He argues that given the observable benefits presented by religious engagement, the observable harms of its exclusion, and the implausibility of the alternatives, religious communities and religious arguments play a crucial role in funding an appropriate conception of citizenship and of democratic argument.

Weithman’s analysis, therefore, invites a number of interesting follow-up discussions. For instance, to what extent are religious community practices more important than the political content of religious convictions for the purposes of animating religious citizenship? Second, if there is “pervasive and reasonable disagreement about what kinds of reasons can be justifying reasons,” to what extent does this factor affect the form of political debate (i.e., guide our understanding of constitutional questions) and to what extent does it affect the content of political debate (i.e., guide our substantive political discussions within that constitutional framework)? Additionally, how is Weithman’s synthetic social science/normative argument affected by considering a broader array of international examples, for instance, contemporary Europe?

Weithman’s achievement in this book is noteworthy for its interdisciplinary ambitions and its disciplined focus on the ethics of citizenship. He works at the core of significant debates that are more often played out in the more obvious arenas provided by church/state conflicts. The quality of the questions it raises arises from the level of analysis that Weithman provides the reader to get to them.

KENNETH S. BIGGER, *Chicago, Illinois.*

SKILLEN, JAMES W. *In Pursuit of Justice: Christian-Democratic Explorations*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004. xii+179 pp. \$65.00 (cloth); \$22.95 (paper).

In Pursuit of Justice: Christian-Democratic Explorations by James W. Skillen presents a case for clarifying the distinct roles of state and society in securing justice and promoting human development. Skillen draws on theological anthropology, political theory, and public policy to argue that “human responsibility before God in conformity with God’s creating, judging, and redeeming work in Jesus Christ is not only compatible with democracy as a system of representative government, but actually calls for it” (2). Among the public policy issues that Skillen considers are public education, welfare reform, environmental reg-

ulation, and electoral reform (this last issue is especially well considered). By exploring the implications of specific theological and political commitments for public policy, he provides a welcome alternative to accounts of political theology that are overly abstract and that leave readers to wonder how the ideas presented might make a difference in the world. However, some of Skillen's public policy conclusions also reveal problems that lurk within his theoretical foundations.

Central to Skillen's argument is the claim that "the historical differentiation and development of diverse social, economic, and political institutions is essential for the full realization of human life" (29). Examples of diverse spheres include the family, businesses, religious institutions, and schools. Injustice occurs whenever a human institution—state, economy, church, or otherwise—attempts to "serve as the omniscient authority and controlling center for all of human life" (8). While this concept of injustice leads Skillen to an argument for limited government, it also leads to an argument for active citizen participation in political life because "the healthy differentiation of society is only possible if a political community also emerges to become the public-legal guardian of the commons in which the great variety of differentiated responsibilities can all develop and flourish simultaneously" (9).

As he develops the case for a Christian-democratic understanding of the differentiation of state and society, Skillen's foil is "liberal ideology." Classic liberalism, he contends, views human beings as "economically acquisitive animals, destined to desire maximum individual autonomy" (46). Government is something of a paradox for Skillen's liberals. On the one hand, it is an unnatural institution (9), established only for the protection of individual rights, especially property rights; on the other, it becomes an all-encompassing and omniscient authority that views all human associations and institutions as means to the end of maximizing individual freedom (25–30). Add the disestablishment of religion to an all-encompassing understanding of government and the result for Skillen is the elimination of religion from public life, along with a variety of public policy problems that result from a failure to respect and promote the different spheres of human life.

While Skillen seems to intend for this book to amount to something of a platform for a future Christian-democratic movement within the United States, one is left wondering how many of his conclusions are either Christian or democratic. There is nothing distinctively Christian in his theological anthropology, at least as it pertains to politics. Many Jews, Muslims, and other theists could affirm the same theological conclusions that Skillen applies to his understanding of justice and political life. This would suggest that limiting the outreach of a future political movement to Christians could be justified only on religious grounds that were not politically relevant.

More striking, however, is the absence of a clear indication of why democracy should be the normative form of government and, in light of Skillen's emphasis on religion and public life, how democracy relates to the disestablishment of religion. Consider Skillen's discussion of Charitable Choice, the welfare reform initiative designed to allow religious groups to receive government funding for the provision of social services. Given the importance of respecting the different spheres of human life, when government chooses to partner with religious organizations in providing social services, "it can do justice to them and to all eligible recipients only by preserving the full integrity of all parties" (71). Preserving the full integrity of religious social service agencies requires,

according to Skillen, that they be allowed to discriminate in their hiring practices and that they not be forced to separate the service they provide from their religious activities (72). Democratic neutrality is preserved as long as the government “remains fully pluralistic in its partnerships” (72).

Skillen’s argument, however, leads in many directions that he never considers. If religious social service agencies should be allowed to discriminate in their hiring, why not also in those they are willing to serve? Skillen himself suggests this outcome when he notes that “not every group will be able to serve every eligible person” (71). Opportunities for discrimination abound if we extend the logic of Skillen’s Charitable Choice discussion to all other spheres of human life. Business, like social service, can be viewed as an extension of one’s religious convictions, so it would seem to follow that businesses should be allowed to discriminate in their business practices if their discrimination results from religious convictions. Even disestablishment itself seems at risk. Just as there can be Christian families, Christian schools, Christian social service providers, and Christian businesses, there could also be Christian governments. Skillen never clarifies why such an outcome would be antithetical to a Christian-democratic understanding of public life.

While many governments have both historically and to the present day sought to show that religious establishment is compatible with religious freedom, the United States is notable for its explicit denial of this possibility. If Skillen wants to create a new understanding of political life within the United States, he would be well served by first showing how this understanding requires a commitment to the disestablishment of religion.

JOE PETTIT, *Morgan State University*.

WUTHNOW, ROBERT. *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005. xvii + 391 pp. \$29.95 (cloth).

Religious pluralism is one of the major themes in the study of American religion. It tends to be revisited each time a period of new immigration transforms the religious makeup of the country. In *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity*, sociologist of religion Robert Wuthnow joins a number of other scholars and commentators in the last decade who have sought to understand the implications of America’s “new” religious diversity that was brought about by changes in immigration over the last forty years. During this time the United States moved from a Protestant-Catholic-Jewish nation to one that now also includes significant Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim communities, among others. While Wuthnow’s account sheds more light on familiar terrain, to what extent is he breaking new ground?

Wuthnow is recognized for his work that helped reorient sociology toward interpretive analysis (examining social relations through the study of signs, symbols, moral codes, and language to see how people make sense of their world). He builds on this kind of approach here by exploring people’s religious practices and the tacit assumptions they have about religious diversity. With the help of a team of researchers, he organized more than three hundred in-depth personal interviews and a large-scale national survey over a three-year period. This research model enabled him to dig deeply and also reach out broadly. Wuthnow’s work often includes historical analysis too (while employing a sociological framework), and he has written extensively about the post-

World War II period. In this case, he is interested in “the terms in which the relationship between America’s Christian heritage and its growing religious diversity is being debated” (xii).

In contrast with views of pluralism that he feels place little emphasis on the cultural influence of religious differences on civic life, Wuthnow argues that “America and American Christianity have always existed in a world of religious differences and . . . that this awareness is probably greater among rank-and-file Americans now than in the past because of mass communications, immigration, and our nation’s role in the global economy” (xiv). While most of the material in the book takes place in the present or recent past, Wuthnow devotes the first chapter to tracing how the peculiarly American tradition of regarding the United States as a Christian nation that is favored by God evolved and came to be challenged by the mid-twentieth century—first by Jews, but now by all the other world religions in the United States. Finding out how and to what extent Americans still think about this was a key factor in his interviews and survey, but this early history is so well documented already by church historians (in particular, Mark A. Noll, *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* [New York, 2002]) that it could have been cut or condensed more effectively in the introduction.

A second chapter treats “The New Diversity” by relating stories of American Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims, but there is very little discussion of immigration history and how or when this new religious diversity came about. As a result, Wuthnow does not sufficiently illustrate the connection between immigration and religion in American history (even as he discusses “The Significance of Diversity” in the next chapter). Although he briefly mentions the hostile climate of anti-Chinese sentiment in the 1880s and anti-Asian Indian sentiment in the 1920s, when Buddhism, Hinduism, and Sikhism were new to America, he does not convey an understanding of similar moments in American history when the massive immigration of Catholics and Jews in the nineteenth and early twentieth century also led to new challenges of religious diversity.

Wuthnow’s interviews with Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims in the second chapter provide many different voices and stories. The bulk of the book largely explores how modern American Protestants are responding to the new religious diversity. The question of Wuthnow’s intended audience has been made clear earlier in the preface and introduction, as Wuthnow often equates “we” with “American” and/or “Christian,” and this slippage seems to reveal something of Wuthnow’s own tacit assumptions about American identity when he adopts an us/them tone. He builds on this when he also uses the common Christian theological typology of three different responses to religious diversity (pluralism, inclusivism, and exclusivism) to frame three chapters that explore interviews with those who embrace diversity, those who are Christian but accept diversity and hold that God has “many mansions,” and those who are Christian but resist diversity and believe there is only “one way.” Wuthnow uses the term “spiritual shoppers” to represent the pluralist position, yet some may feel this label actually misrepresents, or even belittles, such a view. Together, these chapters increase our understanding of this typology of responses by relating stories and statements of the three different types of people and how they live,

practice, and think about their beliefs; nevertheless, they are still based on a traditional framework.

A later chapter moves from the individual to the organizational level to show how various Christian congregations and churches are managing themselves in the face of diversity. In the chapter on Wuthnow's national "Religion and Diversity" survey, he lays out a more quantitative analysis of related questions that enables him to suggest some trends among Americans—for instance, he notes that "although it is common to give lip service to the value of diversity, many Americans regard religions other than their own as fanatical, conducive to violence, closed-minded, backward, and strange" (228). Yet, he also observes that "the typical American . . . thinks it is probably a good idea to get the leaders of the various religions together . . . [and] even acknowledges that he or she should learn more about other religions, should gain a clearer understanding of them, and should work harder to figure out what he or she truly believes about religion" (229). Along with the survey, Wuthnow's most original contribution in the book appears near the end in a chapter on "Negotiating Religiously Mixed Marriages." Observing that interreligious marriage is growing and that unions of every conceivable combination of faiths exist, he predicts that "the most significant effect of interreligious marriage will probably be to reinforce the already prevalent view that faith is essentially a private affair" (284).

In the final chapter, Wuthnow shifts to a prescriptive, prophetic mode that seems to build on ideas from an earlier book, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America since the 1950s* (Berkeley, 1998). He argues that the overall "live-and-let-live approach [among most Americans] to . . . religious and cultural diversity . . . is too casual, too easy" (287). He believes that, instead of avoiding contact and never thinking about differences that do exist, more people should learn to practice what he calls "reflective pluralism." Wuthnow's reflective pluralism involves awareness, mindfulness, and attention to following a code of conduct with certain conditions he outlines for handling one's everyday life and interactions in religiously diverse society. Those in interreligious marriages, along with clergy and community leaders, are the ones leading the way, and it will take more active efforts and good reasons on their part to bring about the kind of interreligious cooperation so crucial for the civic good of the country. Readers may find Wuthnow's idea of reflective pluralism attractive, but there is no sense of the tradition and literature from which it came—he does not get into the history and changing meanings of some of the key concepts that he assumes readers already understand. Some will also find Wuthnow's reflective pluralism very similar to concepts already advanced by comparative religion scholar Diana L. Eck and American religious historian Martin E. Marty, among others.

Like the others, Wuthnow favors a macro study approach with snapshots of different places to give some sense of the big picture. But what is missing are good micro or neighborhood studies of religious pluralism. Even with lots of interviews and a survey, one can only skim the surface of a particular place in a macro analysis—much of the history, complexity, and detail is lost. Despite some noted criticism, however, Wuthnow's book is a rich and important discussion in which he brings his trademark style of cultural analysis to look at

conventional concepts in new ways and deepen our understanding of where we might go.

R. SCOTT HANSON, *Philadelphia University*.

EISEN, ROBERT. *The Book of Job in Medieval Jewish Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 324 pp. \$60.00 (cloth).

The book of Job attests to mankind's religious struggle with the problem of evil since biblical times. Why do the righteous suffer? Does God care? It is only natural that this book, over the centuries since its composition, has received more than its share of commentaries, each in light of the prevailing religious thinking of the time. Modern biblical scholarship, on the other hand, generally aims to cut through the intervening layers of typically subjective commentary to reveal the original Job (more than one, if the work is a composite). Rather than fashioning Job in our own image, the thinking goes, historical-critical scholarship interprets Job in its original ancient Near Eastern context. Yet recent literary theory questions the very assumption that interpretation is an archaeological dig for the author's original intent ("the intentional fallacy") and instead emphasizes the reader's role in producing meaning through an encounter with the text that is necessarily subjective ("reader response" criticism). As Adele Berlin ("On the Use of Traditional Jewish Exegesis in the Modern Literary Study of the Bible," in *Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg*, ed. Mordechai Cogan, Barry Eichler, and Jeffrey Tigay [Winona Lake, IN, 1997], 173–83) has noted, this lends new significance to the study of traditional biblical commentaries, which represent earlier readers' attempts to find meaning in Scripture that can guide us in our encounter with the sacred text nowadays.

In this respect, Robert Eisen's new book is a most valuable addition to a growing body of recent scholarship of the ancient and medieval interpretations of Job, including studies and critically edited texts such as Susan Schreiner's *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found? Calvin's Exegesis of Job* (Chicago, 1994), Sara Japhet's *The Commentary of Rabbi Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam) on the Book of Job* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem, 2000), and Hananel Mack's *Ela Mashal Hayah: Job and the Book of Job in Rabbinic Literature* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem, 2004). Even within this scholarly wave, Eisen's work stands out because he ambitiously has chosen to analyze an entire array of commentaries that interpret the text philosophically, a method established by Saadia Gaon (Iraq, tenth century), refined by Maimonides (Egypt, twelfth century), and modified further by later authors in Provence, Spain, and Italy until the early Renaissance.

Eisen's methodological introduction (chap. 1), which defines "philosophical exegesis" as a distinct category (see below), is followed by in-depth studies of Saadia, Maimonides, Samuel ibn Tibbon (with brief discussions of the "Tibbonide" interpreters Immanuel of Rome, Elijah ben Eliezer ha-Yerushalmi, and Isaac Arundi), Zerahiah Hen, Gersonides, and Simon ben Zemah Duran (chaps. 2–7). A wealth of information is presented in the lucid text and learned notes on these important and often highly original commentaries, some of which have received little earlier scholarly attention. While geographically and linguistically diverse (Saadia and Maimonides wrote in Arabic; the others in Hebrew), all of these commentators utilized Greco-Arabic philosophy to cast the dialogues between Job and his companions Eliphaz, Bildad, and

Zophar as an analytic debate, which Elihu (who enters after the others became deadlocked) settles with a novel theory that reconciles Job's suffering with divine providence and justice. After deftly revealing the interpretive steps each commentator took to devise a unique, nuanced reading, Eisen devotes chapter 8 to tracing the shared elements that unite them in a continuous philosophical exegetical tradition.

Finally (chap. 9), Eisen considers modern scholarship, noting that the philosophers foreshadowed the contemporary view that the book of Job "undermines the traditional notion of retributive justice represented in the Torah" (225). But whereas they ultimately found new philosophical solutions, "the moderns conclude that no rational explanation . . . is forthcoming and that one must find comfort in some other experience, whether it be faith or a feeling of closeness to God" (226). We may add that many modern scholars also reject the very premise that the dialogues in Job are analytic debates and instead view them as confused ramblings (see Marvin Pope, *Job: Anchor Bible* [New York 1965], 75). Indeed, Eisen consistently observes the ingenuity displayed by his medieval authors in their endeavor to "make sense of the dialogue," a directive first articulated by Saadia, who spells out the need "to abstract the key point from each of the speeches of the participants" and define it philosophically (22). As Eisen explains in his introduction, this distinguishes the philosophers from exegetes of the so-called *peshat* school, whose "focus was almost exclusively on making sense of words, phrases, and verses" (4) without seeking to impose analytic clarity onto the dialogues or—as Zerahiah Hen laments—even find any philosophical wisdom in Job (113–14). Precisely for this reason, some argue that the philosophers project foreign ideas onto the text, whereas the *peshat* exegetes allow Scripture to speak for itself. In light of Berlin's essay, we can say that Eisen's study responds to this argument by demonstrating that the philosophers took their interpretive task seriously and that their commentaries, which manifest responsibility to the language of Scripture, represent meaningful encounters with the text.

Eisen's truly informative study represents a profound contribution to the scholarship of Job interpretation, since he brings to light the distinctive, vibrant Jewish philosophical exegetical school. Having said this, I would place his study in a somewhat different perspective since, in my opinion, he overstates the division between the *peshat* and philosophical schools. While the northern French *peshat* exegetes were innocent of philosophy, the same cannot be said about the Babylonian-Iberian philological (*peshat*) school pioneered by none other than Saadia, whose commentary on Job (like his other commentaries) is primarily a linguistic-contextual analysis of the biblical text. Conversely, the celebrated Spanish *peshat* exegete Abraham Ibn Ezra—who was a Neoplatonist—included a Saadianic philosophical synopsis at the conclusion of his philological commentary that is worthy of mention (as Eisen did for the "Tibbonide" readers in chap. 4), especially since he may have influenced Maimonides' reading of Job (see Mordechai Cohen, "A Philosopher's *Peshat* Exegesis: Maimonides' Literary Approach to the Book of Job" [in Hebrew], *Shnaton: An Annual for Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 15 [2005]: 17).

As recent scholarship has shown, *peshat* is not just literal interpretation. Nor is its definition as "straightforward," "objective" analysis that matches the author's intent problem free. Apart from manifesting the "intentional fallacy," this definition has been challenged by new studies revealing the cultural influences on the most vociferous practitioners of *peshat* (e.g., Elazar Touitou, *Ex-*

egesis in Perpetual Motion: Studies in the Pentateuchal Commentary of Rabbi Samuel Ben Meir [in Hebrew; Ramat-Gan, 2003]). Moreover, Saadia (*Beliefs and Opinions*, 7:1) established that Scripture must be interpreted in light of reason, that is, science and philosophy, a rule he repeats in his introduction to Job (*The Book of Theodicy: Translation and Commentary on the Book of Job by Saadiah ben Joseph al-Fayyumi*, trans. L. Goodman [New Haven, CT], 131) to support the above-mentioned directive cited by Eisen. This axiom guided later Spanish *peshat* exegetes such as Ibn Ezra, Kimhi, and Nahmanides, for whom interpretation required not simply philological analysis but also placing the text within a conceptual framework inevitably influenced by extratextual factors that informed their encounter with Scripture. The philosophical readings of Job thus represent another facet of this tradition (see Cohen, "Philosopher's *Peshat*," 245–61).

We can raise a similar point with respect to Eisen's assessment of Nahmanides as a representative of yet a third school, kabbalistic interpretation (237). To me Nahmanides seems firmly anchored in the philosophical—and *peshat*—schools. Although the solution he attributes to Elihu is based on the kabbalistic notion of *gilgul* (reincarnation), which, as Eisen notes, influenced Simon ben Zemah Duran (194), Nahmanides' analytic reading of the dialogues bears Maimonides' imprint. Moreover, Nahmanides adds a novel psychological perspective to Job (as he does in his Torah commentary) by showing how the tension between the interlocutors escalates throughout the debates (see Mordechai Cohen, "Great Searchings of the Heart: Psychological Sensitivity in Nahmanides' Commentaries on the Torah and Job" [in Hebrew], in *Amos Hakham Jubilee Volume*, ed. N. Hakham and Y. Ofer [Alon Shvut, Israel, forthcoming]). Eisen (196) notes this feature in Duran's commentary and identifies Ibn Kaspi as his source, but it seems more likely that Nahmanides influenced both authors.

Notwithstanding my preference to link the various schools, Eisen's study of the exegetes he has chosen is undoubtedly one of the most important recent works on the history of Job interpretation. Having provided an essential resource for readers who wish to know how this book was understood in Jewish tradition, Eisen establishes the standing of these philosophers within the pantheon of profound readers of Job throughout history.

MORDECHAI Z. COHEN, *Yeshiva University*.

JACOBS, LOUIS. *Their Heads in Heaven: Unfamiliar Aspects of Hasidism*. London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005. x+190 pp. \$28.95 (paper).

This volume is one of several recent ventures to collect and re-present the lifetime achievements of Louis Jacobs. This collection draws together published and unpublished essays, encyclopedia entries, and lectures on aspects of Hasidism, the popular mystical movement that arose in eighteenth-century Eastern European Jewry. The articles, spanning the length of Jacobs's career, are a series of studies on the attitudes, doctrines, literature, exegetical methods, and sociological features of Hasidism. Jacobs's early immersion in Hasidic learning in Eastern European Yeshivot reconstituted in England, coupled with his scholarly training, makes him a rare, if not *sui generis*, purveyor of Hasidic knowledge.

Those familiar with Jacobs's scholarly oeuvre will immediately notice several lacunae in this collection. After all, over the course of his prolific career, Jacobs

has weighed in on the academic study of Hasidism (e.g., "Aspects of Scholem's Study of Hasidism," *Modern Judaism* 5, no. 1 [1985]: 95–104), published annotated translations of classical Hasidic works (e.g., Dobh Baer of Lubavitch's *Tract on Ecstasy* [London, 1962]), engaged Hasidic doctrine with philosophic reasoning (e.g., "Jewish Parallels to the Tertullian Paradox," in his *Faith* [New York, 1968]: 201–9), and explored the role of Hasidism in shaping present-day constructive Jewish theology ("The Relevance and Irrelevance of Hasidism," Solomon Goldman Lectures, Spertus College, Chicago, 1979). Notwithstanding our indebtedness to Vallentine Mitchell for bringing together the scattered sparks of Jacobs's scholarship, how are we to understand this idiosyncratic volume of phenomenological jottings on Hasidic thought and culture?

Our Ariadne's thread becomes visible by placing this book alongside a strikingly similar collection of essays by Jacobs's late colleague and friend Joseph Weiss. Weiss's *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism* (ed. David Goldstein [Oxford 1985]) contains a table of contents very much like the one for this volume. Indeed, these two scholars, both participants in Alexander Altmann's Institute of Jewish Studies, in Manchester, collaborated and supported each other's scholarly efforts. Together they sought to bring the texts, themes, and theology of Eastern European Jewry to the English-speaking public.

For example, both Jacobs and Weiss seek to come to terms with Hasidic motivations for the study of Torah. The rabbinic ideal of Torah "for its own sake" viewed Torah study as an intellectual end to itself, one without ulterior motivation. The Hasidic emphasis on *devekut* (spiritual practices aimed toward adherence to God) risked denigrating the preeminent status of Torah study. Both Jacobs and Weiss correctly identify the early Hasidic attempts to synthesize the contemplative ideal with the commandment of Torah study by assigning a mystical status to study as an occasion for *devekut* (mystical communion with the Divine). Jacobs posits this theological stance to be a useful sociological marker between Hasidim and their opponents (Mitnagdim). Weiss retrieves multiple voices within Hasidism that seek to marginalize the importance of Torah study altogether, giving *devekut* precedence. Thus while differences exist, these two essays may be read as two sides of one conversation between scholarly peers.

Other themes, common to both Jacobs and Weiss, take very different tactics. Jacobs's study "The Tzaddik as a Source of Danger" explores the magical powers exercised by holy men from the Bible up through Hasidic literature, toward the conclusion that the baneful powers of spiritual holy men is a sustained element throughout Jewish literature. Weiss's study "The Tzaddik: Altering the Divine Will" explores the means by which Hasidism reconciled belief in a supernaturally empowered holy man with the notion of humanity's ongoing dependence on God.

Present throughout Jacobs's essays is his methodological insistence on identifying the constitutive elements of Hasidic thought and culture while avoiding the pitfall of applying unfamiliar and modern categories to an unsystematic literature and culture. As noted, Jacobs seeks to situate the theological and exegetical modes of Hasidism in their sociological context: thus, for example, Jacobs's intriguing suggestion that the pervasiveness of the father-son theme of rebellion and reconciliation in Hasidic literature should be understood as a window into the tensions of this insurgent movement.

Given the varied contexts in which Jacobs's studies were first generated, there exists an uneven quality to the chapters, ranging from the sophisticated

to the journalistic and homiletic. So too, there exists inevitable an overlap of material (e.g., treatment of the *Nefesh Hayyim*'s views on Torah study in chaps. 2 and 9). Given the breadth of insights offered throughout this volume, these drawbacks are more than mitigated. Ultimately, this volume accomplishes exactly what it sets out to do: to serve as a point of entry into unfamiliar aspects of Hasidism and the scholarly contribution of Louis Jacobs.

ELLIOT COSGROVE, *Chicago, Illinois.*

COHEN, JEREMY. *Sanctifying the Name of God: Jewish Martyrs and Jewish Memories of the First Crusade*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. 224 pp. \$37.50 (cloth).

In 1096, several bands of Crusaders traveling east attacked Jewish communities in western and central Europe, forcing large numbers of Jews, mostly in the Rhineland settlements of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz, to choose between baptism and death. Many responded by slaughtering their children and themselves in order to avoid falling into the Crusaders' hands. These events are graphically described in a unique group of twelfth-century Hebrew chronicles, which have inspired fascination and horror since their publication in the late nineteenth century. Successive generations of historians have struggled to interpret these texts. In recent decades debate over their significance has intensified; scholars have expressed widespread disagreement both over the accuracy and the literary nature of the chronicles themselves and over the historical import of the events that they describe. Jeremy Cohen's *Sanctifying the Name of God: Jewish Martyrs and Jewish Memories of the First Crusade* adds a new dimension to this debate. It is the first major attempt to analyze these chronicles as coherent literary works whose meaning and function depend on the context of their composition.

Without questioning their broad historicity, Cohen's central thesis is that the chronicles tell us more about the mentality of those who composed them than they do about the motivations of the martyrs themselves. The first portion of the book lays the framework for Cohen's argument and methodology. Cohen argues that the perspective on martyrdom expressed in the chronicles cannot be explained simply either as a natural outgrowth of pre-Crusade Jewish attitudes or as reflecting the martyrs' own assimilation of millennial Crusader ideology (which may itself have crystallized only in a later period). Rather, it must be understood in light of the radical dislocation experienced by the survivors of the events of 1096, most of whom had chosen baptism over martyrdom, and who must have retained intense guilt and a wide range of conflicting emotions regarding both the martyrs' and their own actions. Drawing on a variety of theoretical models inspired by recent scholarship on both Jewish and Christian medieval historiography, as well as by literary criticism, Cohen proposes a strategy for uncovering this complex of perspectives from the text of the chronicles.

The second part of the book applies this strategy to five martyr stories from the chronicle of Solomon bar Samson, the longest of the three First Crusade chronicles. Cohen analyzes these stories closely, focusing on certain textual features that might reveal their accommodation of multiple and contradictory layers of meaning. These include incongruous narrative details, intertextual allusions, and implicit evocations of both Jewish and Christian cultural themes.

Via a thorough and often ingenious exploration of the rabbinic treatment of specific verses, canonical figures, and symbolic actions invoked by the chronicles, Cohen demonstrates the distance between the ostensible rhetorical function of these allusions and their complex range of potential significance. He also considers the implications of the chroniclers' appropriation of Christian imagery in light of their own experience of involuntary baptism. This analysis suggests that, despite the chronicles' overt idealization of the martyrs, they also express irony, doubt, and even repugnance toward the martyrs' actions, as well as giving vent to the survivors' own cultural disorientation.

Cohen's interpretation is fascinating and often compelling. But it is not always clear whether the negative undercurrents that he describes are actually present in the chronicles or simply reflect the modern reader's lack of sympathy for the behavior that they eulogize. The proposed ambivalence of several of these stories arises chiefly from the fact that the classical models and stock praise invoked to commemorate the martyrs fail to adequately explain to us their gruesome and startling actions. It is difficult to know with certainty whether the chroniclers themselves were similarly disturbed. The significance of the textual features that Cohen exploits may perhaps best be gauged by recourse to pertinent historical and comparative literary questions that his treatment leaves open. In particular, it would be useful to compare the aspects of the chronicles that he discusses with cognate features in later Ashkenazi works that touch on martyrdom. Broader consideration of the function of intertextual allusions in medieval Ashkenazi literature would also be illuminating in this context, while discussion of the chronicles' editing and interrelationship might prove relevant to the analysis of their narrative inconsistencies. Wherever such questions may ultimately lead, this is a beautifully written and thought-out work that raises valuable questions and draws unprecedented attention to important features of these texts; it is sure to provoke fruitful discussion.

EVE KRAKOWSKI, *Chicago, Illinois.*

ELIOR, RACHEL. *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism*. Translated by David Louvish. Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004. xiv+301 pp. \$24.95 (paper).

In this study, first published in Hebrew in 2002, Rachel Elier crafts a grand narrative about the origins of *merkavah* mysticism that evokes the epic style of Gershom Scholem. Elier has published extensively on many aspects of kabbalah from *hekhlat* to Hasidism, and she stands out as one of the few senior women in her field. Focusing here on ancient Judaism, she draws on an astounding array of primary sources from the biblical period through late antiquity, a rare accomplishment in a field where the scholarly standard is exemplified by focused, philological analysis of deliberately narrow groups of texts. Her interdisciplinary approach, also uncommon in studies of ancient Jewish literature, combines meticulous analysis of classical texts with insights gleaned from religion, ritual studies, astronomy, and mathematics, invoking critical theorists as diverse as Walter Benjamin, Mikhail Bakhtin, Mircea Eliade, and Thomas Mann.

But Elier's work is significant for more than just its scope and method. In locating the *hekhlat* narratives firmly in antiquity, she confronts problems that

have long perplexed scholars of Jewish mysticism: where did this esoteric tradition come from, who wrote it, and what is its relationship to rabbinic culture? It is generally held that the *hekhalot* manuscripts date to the twelfth century CE among a pietistic circle in medieval Germany known as the Hasidei Ashkenaz. The texts are presented in a rabbinic framework and feature the rabbis Akiva and Ishmael as their heroes. However, *hekhalot* literature—with its highly mythologized heavenly journeys, angelic encounters, visions of God, and revelations of esoteric knowledge—has much in common with a great deal of literature of the second temple era. Elinor contends that the notion of a heavenly *merkavah*, or chariot-throne, must be understood within the context of sectarian polemics surrounding the priesthood of the second temple period (233ff.). To make her case, Elinor traces connections between *hekhalot* literature and a sweeping collection of primary sources, including biblical texts, apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic sectarian works (1 Enoch and Jubilees), the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls (*Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, *The Temple Scroll*, and *MMT*), and a variety of rabbinic sources.

Elinor envisions a continuous thread of tradition that links the deposed priests of the first temple exiled in 587 BCE, the Zadokite priests replaced by the Hasmonean dynasty in the late second century BCE, and the priestly circles that lost their power in the wake of the destruction of the second temple in 70 CE. Deprived of their right to minister in the earthly temple, these “secessionist priests” imagined a supernal temple of cosmic proportions in which true sacred service is conducted among angelic beings in the presence of God. These generations of secessionist priests “shared a spiritual universe of discourse which seems to indicate a significant, continuous line linking the memory of the Temple and its rites, as well as the cosmic world view that it represented . . . with the beginnings of Jewish mysticism” (260).

The Temple, as Elinor understands it in both its earthly and its heavenly manifestations, is a symbol of cosmic order. It is a spatial representation of the movement of time, and thus, numerical symbolism emerges as a key theme in the book’s argument. Indeed, many of her ten chapters are devoted to detailed discussions of the intricacies of the fourfold and sevenfold axes that are synchronized in the symbolism of the *merkavah*. Elinor, following Bakhtin, refers to the *merkavah* as a “chronotope” that symbolizes the unity of time and space (30). In this respect, control over temple ritual is about more than earthly political power—it is about the power to maintain the correspondence between heaven and earth through the synchronization of temple ritual with the movement of the heavenly bodies and, by extension, with divine will.

Elinor’s analysis of cultic symbolism highlights the relationship between ritual and ideology. She suggests that the secessionist priests, whom she claims authored much of the sectarian literature of the second temple era, advocated a biblically based, 364-day solar calendar, while their opponents, the rabbinic Sages, held to a lunar calendar that relied on human observation of the moon’s phases. The dichotomy between these two opposing streams of thought provides the central tension in Elinor’s scheme: the secessionists, who believe that divine revelation is ongoing, view time as a divinely revealed process that is fixed and unchanging, and this process is mirrored in the performance of cultic rites. However, the rabbis, for whom prophecy has ceased and for whom the study of text replaces temple worship, posit a worldview that necessitates human participation in setting sacred cycles. Elinor presents the rabbis as almost secular in spirit—privileging human knowledge and the human faculty of

interpretation toward the greater goal of widening access to the Torah (212, 221ff., 231).

Elior's book is not exhaustive, as no project of its magnitude could be. She is often overly reductive, she sometimes overstates her case, and she neglects to cite some relevant recent scholarship. She does acknowledge that her attempt to reconstruct a history of Jewish mysticism from obscure and fragmented sources is replete with challenges, yet, as Elior writes, "the attempt to decipher and reconstruct . . . to seek, interpret and conjecture, seems worthwhile as far as the textual evidence, both written and implied, will allow us" (22). Elior's strength lies in her willingness to take such risks, and this very worthwhile work deserves praise for its breathtaking scope, its bold courage, and its brilliant creativity.

ANDREA LIEBER, *Dickinson College*.

ROSE, JAQUELINE. *The Question of Zion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005, 202 pp. \$19.95 (paper).

The title of this volume, *The Question of Zion*, echoes that of Edward Said's *The Question of Palestine* (1979). The elective affinity with Said, to whom the book is dedicated, is manifest. The perspectives of these two literary theorists, a Jew and a Palestinian, mirror the conflict of two peoples tragically linked through their historical experience. Driven by an "anguished curiosity" (11) and "appalled at what the Israeli nation perpetrated in my name" (xvi), this provocative essay seeks to create an open discourse on "what Zionism is, or was" (13). Rose's approach is critical but not, she insists, anti-Zionist. She sets out to plumb the "mind-set" (xiii) of Zionism, which, she maintains, can be encapsulated in one word: psychosis. Due to its defensive mechanisms dating back to the Jewish self-defense groups in the aftermath of the pogroms in Russia at the turn of the twentieth century, Zionism uncritically perpetuates the "divinely ordained" biblical claim to the land. Rather than creating a secure home for the Jews, enabling them to escape anti-Semitism and attain normalcy, Zionism has encased them in a phantasmagoria that compromises a sober perspective. Its very fusion of religious myths and political reality renders Zionism "unable to acknowledge itself as an active participant in the world against which it protests" (xviii) or to realize morality and justice. Hence, to overcome the impasse caused by Zionism's failure to confront "its own delusion" (16) requires "a clear critique of Israel today" (xviii).

Zionism, according to Rose, is not only a political movement but also a specific expression of Jewish identity. However, it has become one that radically undermines the pristine ethos of Judaism, for "when suffering becomes an identity, it has to turn cruel" (115). Rose presents Zionism as a psychic triptych of messianism, psychoanalysis, and politics. Understanding Zionism means probing how the movement translated the redemptive yearning for Zion into a political praxis. According to the author, this process of translation was fundamentally flawed.

Drawing on Gershom Scholem's oft-cited definition of Jewish messianism as a "theory of catastrophe," Rose argues that in the state of Israel "catastrophe has become an identity" (8), even to the degree of "catastrophic exultation" (20). The unbroken nexus between messianism and Zionism has become an unchallenged pattern of explanation for any political event of a cataclysmic

nature. Rose sees aspects of Zionism as a continuation of the legacy of Shabbtai Zvi, the manic-depressive seventeenth-century pseudo-Messiah who held his climactic conversion to Islam to be part of the process of cosmic redemption. In his appropriation of the Lurianic myth of the fallen divine sparks that are, according to kabbalistic theory, captivated in the realm of evil awaiting their redemption by the people of Israel, Shabbtai Zvi allowed the Jews once again to consider themselves a major force in history (23). Hence Rose situates Shabbtai Zvi at the origin of what she deems to be a national psychopathology. However, Rose's assertion that "Zionism is the first Jewish messianic movement after [Shabbtai] Zvi" (9) contradicts her view that with Zionism nationalism has replaced messianism. Further, to draw a line between kabbalistic myth in its Shabbatean and Frankist version (corrigendum: not Joseph but Jacob Frank) in which "evil lay on the path to redemption" (27) and the maleficence of present-day Israeli politics seems far-fetched.

While secularized messianism undoubtedly informs the political reality of the prestate period, one must distinguish between the religious rhetoric of the early secular Zionists, which tapped the emotional bonds of the pioneers to Judaism to legitimize the claim to Zion, and the messianic rhetoric of the post-Six Day War ultranationalist Gush Emunim. Throughout her collage of highly selective quotations depicting Zionism as a movement that "defies reality" and favors "militarization of nationhood" (126), Rose praises those intellectuals who stood for an alternative, humanistic Zionism but, alas, "have been mostly silenced" since statehood (69). Martin Buber, Hans Kohn, and Hannah Arendt are portrayed as introspective analysts of Zionism, who soberly probed its unconscious "psychic dimension" (79). These voices were wary of nationalist assimilation and sought to overcome the discourse on Jewish destiny as teleologically fulfilling itself in history.

Yet Rose's own perspective, inspired by the thought of Jacques Lacan and Walter Benjamin, entraps her in the very psychic timelessness that she criticizes in Herzlian Zionism and lays bare the book's logical contradictions: "Zionism, as a unique national movement, had the opportunity to forge a model of nationhood, neither belligerently nor preemptively, but ambivalent, uncertain, obscure, something closer to this disquieting and transformative space. But did not take it" [*sic*; 86]. Uniqueness? Isn't the putative uniqueness of Zionism the very messianic idea, here analyzed as the origin of the psychosis, that renders the movement indeed *sui generis*? Is Zionism, as Rose mournfully contends, nothing but a utopia lost? What about the successfully realized aspects of building a new society that was likewise propelled by messianic utopianism and its yearning for new moral horizons, such as the Kibbutzim? Besides, there is a fundamental difference between the drawing board and history. Can Zionism as a secular national liberation movement be uplifted from the quagmire of history to bear witness to a superior Jewish ethos? Zionism as Jewish self-determination was generated from outside Judaism. Because nationalism was alien to Judaism, only messianism, one could argue, could serve as a transmission belt to transmit this idea. Further, Rose sees a psychopathological "link between the Holocaust and what is happening in Israel today" (145)—an unsustainable analogy even if one is painfully aware of the injustice suffered by Palestinians attendant to the realization of the Zionist project.

The old question arises of to what extent a humanistic nationalism was and is possible in Palestine/Israel given the legitimate existential but, alas, conflicting interests of two peoples. What is at stake is indeed a transition from cen-

turies of Jewish powerlessness to power. What defines a viable and secure homeland or state might depend on the historical circumstances as well as on any *raison d'état*. Moreover, Zionism's *mission civilisatrice* was indeed self-directed, aiming at the realization of a spiritual, social, cultural, and moral renewal of the battered Jewish people. But Rose tends to locate the source of the problem in (Jewish) statehood itself rather than in the need to historicize the founding myths of the state of Israel. Notwithstanding the seeming intractable conflict with their neighbors, the majority of Israelis would still uphold Zionism's claim to have accomplished something approaching normalcy.

Certainly, a commitment to the principles of a civil society in which the citizens shape their collective self-understanding rather than leave it to the domain of the state requires a continued discussion of the increasing impact of civil religion in Israel and beyond. Rose's book has the merit of probing the problematic liaison in the Jewish state between nationalism and religion, on the one hand, and national myth and political reality, on the other. From the perspective of the study of religion, her book challenges us to pay heed to the fundamental conceptual difference between (religious) redemption and (national) liberation.

MARTINA URBAN, *Vanderbilt University*.

HALLAQ, WAEL B. *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law*. Themes in Islamic Law I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. ix+234 pp. \$70.00 (cloth); \$24.99 (paper).

Given the centrality of law in Islamic thought and practice, the paucity of books that offer an educated overview of its history is puzzling. Scholars of religion as well as scholars dealing with other aspects of the Islamic tradition should therefore hail as good news the appearance of a concise introduction to the subject of early Islamic law by one of its most prominent contemporary scholars, Wael B. Hallaq.

At the heart of Hallaq's book is a coherent and, within the constraints dictated by its length, remarkably comprehensive narrative of the emergence and early development of Sunni Islamic law. In a number of ways, this work represents an advance over Joseph Schacht's seminal 1957 book *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, hitherto considered the standard reference work on the subject. While Schacht limits his inquiry to an examination of theoretical aspects of law, Hallaq's analysis integrates theory with actual legal practice. In particular, he sheds new light on areas such as the formative role of early judges and the doctrinal evolution of the four Sunni legal schools. Further, Hallaq's treatment of fundamental questions such as the cultural origin of Islamic law is more nuanced and sophisticated than Schacht's. He convincingly portrays Islamic law as emerging within an indigenous Arabian legal tradition that incorporated aspects of Greco-Roman and Semitic laws. In addition, his persuasive account of the symbiotic relationship of law and politics in the Abbasid period provides a robust challenge to Patricia Crone's hypothesis of a zero-sum competition for religious authority between scholars and rulers.

Hallaq's historical narrative culminates in the central revisionist thesis about what he calls the "Great Rationalist-Traditionalist Synthesis," the emergence of a comprehensive hermeneutic hierarchy that incorporates both the sacred texts (Quran and prophetic Hadith) and the methods of analogical reasoning

that permit the extension of these texts to novel situations. The standard account of Islamic scholarship—accepted by Schacht—locates this development in the ninth century. Hallaq, however, argues that it did not in fact take place until a century later, when Islamic law finally reached its “complete form” defined by a set of “essential attributes” (3). This bold thesis, originally laid out in a 1993 article, “Was al-Shafi’i the Master Architect of Islamic Jurisprudence?” (*International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25:587–605), is likely to be the most controversial element of the book. I will briefly mention two issues that it raises.

First, Hallaq’s assertion that the tenth century witnessed a definitive and simultaneous maturation of the chief elements of Islamic law remains unproven. In fact, there is compelling counterevidence that indicates that the actual historical evolution of Islamic law was less orderly and more gradual than his thesis suggests. For example, the archrationalist Wāsil Ibn ‘Atā’ proposed something very much like the “Great Synthesis”—a hierarchy of four sources of law encompassing the Quran, established prophetic traditions, rational proof, and scholarly consensus—as early as the first half of the eighth century (al-‘Askarī, *Min Kitāb al-awā’il* [Damascus, 1984]). Second, one wonders about the appositeness of isolating a set of timeless “essential attributes” within a living and dynamic tradition enfolding over a period of more than a thousand years. The precise definitions of these attributes are necessarily based on historically specific manifestations. As a result, much of the argument depends on which particular moment is chosen to represent the baseline. Still, such a paradigm can provide a helpful mental map, particularly for students with limited prior knowledge of the subject.

The ambitious scope of the volume has the inevitable drawback of limiting the space available for in-depth discussion of individual topics; chapter 6, which deals with legal theory, is likely to overwhelm the average reader by summarizing Sunni legal theory in twenty-eight dense pages. Given this necessary trade-off, some narrative details in the early part of the book that are not crucial for the core argument (“Tamīm’s market, al-Mushaqqar, was held in what is now Hufūf . . .”; 12) could have been omitted. However, the unprecedented comprehensiveness and conciseness of the work should make it standard reading for novice students approaching the study of early Islamic law. A field as underdeveloped as Islamic legal studies lacks the minimum scholarly consensus necessary for the production of an uncontroversial textbook. However, Professor Hallaq’s book should be welcomed as an interesting and provocative contribution to an ongoing discussion.

AHMED EL SHAMSY, *Harvard University*.

MASUZAWA, TOMOKO. *The Invention of World Religions; or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. xv+359 pp. \$47.50 (cloth); \$19.00 (paper).

In the old days “inventions” were celebrated, and they tended to refer to practical accomplishments, such as Eli Whitney’s invention of the cotton gin. Nowadays “inventions” are scorned, and they refer to ideas. In the old days ideas were discovered, not invented. If they turned out to be false, they were rejected. Nowadays ideas are invented, not discovered, and they almost always turn out badly—not because they prove to be false but because they prove to

be tendentious. The test in days of yore was whether ideas, whatever their origin or function, worked. The test today is what the origin and function of ideas are, whether or not they work.

Tomoko Masuzawa's *The Invention of World Religions* is a wonderfully bold attempt to uncover the origin and function of the idea of "world religions." Masuzawa shows that by the nineteenth century the religions of the world were conventionally divided into four groups: Christianity; initially Judaism, later Buddhism; Islam (or Mohammedanism); and everything else, which was labeled paganism, heathenism, idolatry, or polytheism. Early in the nineteenth century this categorization began to be challenged, and by the early twentieth century it had been replaced by "world religions," which now numbered a dozen or so. This categorization remains in place today and is taken as no less natural than the prior one was. So argues Masuzawa.

The conventional view of the concept of "world religions" is that it evinces the multicultural, empathetic spirit of contemporary scholars. God forbid that any religion should be overlooked, misunderstood, or criticized. That a dozen religions are considered worthy of the epithet "world" is touted as evidence of the ecumenical vision of today's scholars.

Masuzawa spurns this self-congratulatory view. She does not merely observe, as others before her have done, that the basis for inclusion is not quite self-evident. Instead, she argues that, despite the tolerance seemingly epitomized by the concept of multiple world religions, the concept ironically originated as a way of preserving the uniqueness and superiority of Christianity. She denies that the "advent" of world religions marks "a turn away from the Eurocentric and Eurohegemonic conception of the world, toward a more egalitarian and lateral delineation" (13).

Masuzawa rightly ties the scientific study of religion to the comparison of religions. But where J. Samuel Preus argues that the scientific, comparative "paradigm" for studying religion arose to replace the Christian-centered theological one, Masuzawa argues that the scientific study of religion arose within theology itself. She even demonstrates that the field that forged the topic of world religions was comparative theology. The grouping together of "great religious systems" was intended to highlight the uniqueness of Christianity, which alone achieved the common goal of universality and transcendence. The comparative method was thus used to show differences, not similarities: "comparative theology would not compromise the unique and exclusive authority of Christianity" (81). Masuzawa devotes separate chapters to Buddhism and Islam, the religions that most threatened Christianity.

The retention of the superiority of Christianity faced one special obstacle: the emergence in linguistics of the divide between Indo-European and Semitic languages. Linguistic families were racial categories, as the synonym for Indo-European—Aryan—attests. Since Hebrew is a Semitic language, and since Christianity evolved out of Judaism, was Christianity not thereby a Semitic language and consequently a Semitic rather than European (or Indo-European) religion and culture and race? Masuzawa shows, as others before her have done, that Christianity was severed from Judaism and regrouped with Hellenism. Masuzawa shows how even the efforts of comparative theologians to pit Christianity against other religions to parade its superiority was attacked by yet more conservative theologians. The scholar who suffered most was William Robertson Smith, who dared to argue that Christianity arose from primitive religion, even while transcending it. He might have garnered more attention.

Masuzawa is not writing about the term "religion" or the term "religious studies," the ideological origin and function of which have been analyzed by Timothy Fitzgerald and Daniel Dubuisson, among the scholars she cites. She confines herself to the term "world religions." But what she says of it parallels what Dubuisson has claimed of "religion" and what Fitzgerald has claimed of "religious studies." Both Dubuisson and Fitzgerald have consequently called for the outright abandonment of their terms. Masuzawa does not explicitly go that far, though clearly for her the term is irretrievable.

Masuzawa's reading is wide-ranging, and with typical panache she draws unusual connections and raises tough questions. Yet there are, understandably, gaps in her story. It was anthropologists who turned linguistic differences into cultural and then racial ones, and it was anthropologists, led by Franz Boas, who severed the tie between culture and race and who led the fight for the equal treatment of all cultures, including all religions. Alas, anthropology garners scant mention. Missing is the work of anthropological historian par excellence George Stocking, who meticulously charts the course of both racial and antiracial anthropological "paradigms." If the study of religion has been as much influenced by linguistics as Masuzawa claims, has it somehow fended off the influence of anthropology, where cultural relativism reigns and where religion remains a central subfield?

Masuzawa's exceedingly well-written book prompts other questions. First, why did the category of "world religions" become so prominent if the goal was to defend the uniqueness of Christianity? Second, does the retention of the term today dictate the retention of its original use? Third, does the use of the term in introductory courses and textbooks really evince the thinking of scholars? Finally, is the term in fact objectionable? Surely some religions, unlike most others, do transcend national or regional boundaries. As long as the criteria used for the category are explicit, and as long as the category identifies significant aspects of religion, why not still employ it?

ROBERT A. SEGAL, *University of Lancaster and University of Aberdeen.*

SMITH, ANTHONY D. *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 360 pp. \$29.95 (cloth).

Ethnicity, linguistic commonality, economic interest, and political stability alone cannot explain the persistence of impassioned national identity. This is the claim advanced by Anthony Smith in *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity*. For Smith, only the sanctification of the national narrative, drawing on long-standing religious symbols and rituals, can account for such enduring passions. Reaching deeper into identity than political ideologies like liberalism or socialism, nationalism operates as "a form of culture and a type of belief-system whose object is the nation conceived as a sacred communion" (18).

Smith, relying on the work of Emile Durkheim, deploys a functional definition of religion as "a system of beliefs and practices that distinguishes the sacred from the profane and unites its adherents in a single moral community of the faithful" (26). As Smith sees it, the structural elements that govern the distinction between the sacred and the profane in traditional religions are integrated into the national culture. The nationalist virtue of authenticity, for example, is laden with the salvific connotations of a return to the sacred. With nationalism,

the intensity directed by religion toward the divine object is directed toward "the people" as such: "the people alone constitute the object of this new religion" (42).

Four categories of "deep cultural resources," predating the rise of the modern nation-state, emerge as the most salient "sacred foundations" for nationalism: "1. the myth of ethnic election, the conviction of being chosen for a covenant or mission, or both, by the deity; 2. a long-standing attachment to particular terrains regarded as sacred and as belonging to the community, and it to them; 3. a yearning to recover or realize the spirit of one or more golden ages, epochs of communal heroism and creativity; 4. a belief in the regenerative power of mass and individual sacrifice to ensure a glorious destiny, and the importance of commemorating and celebrating the community and its heroes" (255). Smith finds these religious cultural resources expressed nationalistically in Thailand, Russia, South Africa, and among Jews, Armenians, and Ethiopians—just to name a few of his examples.

In each instance Smith attempts to describe a process of integration rather than supersession. He apparently rejects the modernist position: "the idea of a straightforward linear process of supplanting 'religion' fails . . . to capture the complexity of the situation" (48). But he does not successfully distinguish his own view from the supersessionist account. By suggesting that nationalism functions as a "religion of the people" (42), in which the people and its destiny alone are holy, he comes fatally close to the classically modernist secularization thesis. To what extent are latent religious resources merely "integrated" into nationalism if these resources necessarily shift their focus from a divine object to a material object in the process? For Smith, the "religion of the people," by definition, excludes the transcendent and the supernatural: "nationalism is a distinctly this worldly movement" (15). Unable to avoid the modernist paradigm, Smith has, at best, provided a particularly subtle version thereof.

It is also not clear to what extent Smith intends to limit the scope of his categories to national movements influenced by biblical themes and to what extent he is positing universal transhistorical phenomena. He appropriately admits to focusing on "the Judeo-Christian tradition" (a problematic category in its own right) in part because of his own reasonable limitations; he also claims that "one can show most clearly the ways in which, within this tradition, the national identities and nationalist ideologies were supported by, and drew upon, key elements within these earlier religious belief-systems" (7). Going further, though, he seems to believe that the model he has identified is universal in human societies. He writes, "The case of Japan demonstrates the independence of processes of territorialization of memory and attachments to ancestral land from a specific religious tradition of salvation, such as Islam, Buddhism, or Christianity, but not from 'religion' in the wider, social (or Durkheimian) sense, or from *some* kind of religious tradition (such as Shinto)" (165).

In general, students of religion are likely to be squeamish about the religious categories used in *Chosen Peoples*. While Smith has probably done more work than anyone to systematically scrutinize theories of nationalism, he has not here given similar attention to theories of religion. He uses Durkheim's functional definition of religion skillfully but neglects to address relevant methodological questions raised by, say, Mircea Eliade, Jonathan Z. Smith, and Talal Asad. Had he taken methodological debates in the academic study of religion

more seriously, he might have been able to avoid the appearance of categorical overreach and insufficiently chastened modernism.

JEFF ISRAEL, *Chicago, Illinois.*

MORGAN, DAVID. *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. 333 pp. \$21.95 (paper).

The Sacred Gaze is David Morgan's fourth and latest contribution to the burgeoning field of visual culture, that interdisciplinary hybrid born out of art history, sociology, and anthropology. The book sets out to counteract the text-bound logocentrism of the academy and demonstrate that visual analysis can be as helpful to religious studies as it is to other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. This is not insignificant, since the entire *Wissenschaft* of religious studies has until recently sustained its original Protestant sensibility and nineteenth-century German philological bias against image veneration. The book thus not only serves as a general introduction to visual studies but also functions like an illustrated reader in the sociology of religion. Individual chapters could also be used as creative additions to undergraduate seminars on religion in America or religion and violence.

The work is divided into three main sections that focus specifically on the theoretical, cross-cultural, and social dimensions of religious imagery. Part 1 first defines visual culture as the entire field of seeing (i.e., the form's iconographic meaning as well as its reception and use by believers). Morgan accordingly outlines seven major functions for religious imagery and theoretically articulates nine kinds of "covenants" that shape how the seer approaches, and therefore perceives, the seen (75). In part 2's exploration of cross-cultural imagery, chapters on iconoclasm and colonial missionary propaganda reveal the dark side of religious imagery. They investigate both the physical and psychological violence that religious representations can produce when deployed across cultural divides. Finally, part 3 examines the social history of two especially meaty visual themes: the nineteenth-century American Protestant depiction of ideal feminine and "hypermuscular" masculine religiosity (210) and the shift from Bible veneration to flag veneration in American Protestant civil religion. The latter two chapters highlight the hypocrisy of Protestant aniconism and make for extremely compelling reading as they play to Morgan's scholarly strengths and interests.

It seems, however, that the author's expertise in Protestant imagery has unconsciously influenced his theoretical vision in part 1. This results in a strange paradox. Even as the book attempts to overcome the Protestant animus against imagery, Morgan nevertheless seems bound by its conceptual framework and set of concerns. For a book on visual culture, an inordinate amount of time is spent on the power of the written word (in Calvinism and Sikhism), on the shift from written to spoken language (in Hindu-Buddhist chanting, early American elementary primers, and nursery rhymes), and on text-image relations (in Magritte, Judaica, Islamic calligraphy, early American religious tracts, and paintings by Harry Anderson and the Renaissance master Gossaert). Morgan's preoccupation with text-image theory helps him to analyze the replacement of the King James Bible with the Stars and Stripes in American schools, but seeking the power of print within pictures only reinforces the old Protes-

tant prejudices. Furthermore, it does nothing to explain the violence of iconoclasm or proselytizing.

For the real issue here is not text or image, or any other outward medium, for that matter. The deeper problem concerns the underlying question of power. One does not fear or smash "idols" because they are word images or visual texts. One does it precisely because one feels threatened by the presence or potency that believers initially invest into a form but then perceive as external agency acting from its own side. Articulating this dynamic feedback loop more fully would have been a better starting point than presenting images as received social givens to be used or abused. Addressing image production and expanding upon *acheiropoesis*, "the device for legitimating the authority of images," would have better unified his cross-cultural and multimedia approach to religious expression (13). Furthermore, highlighting the historically common collapse of material forms with their divine referents would have better deconstructed the Protestant taboo against the immanent indwelling of icons. Finally, analyzing the construction of power relations between icons and their communities (patrons, artists, clergy, laity, politicians, citizens, immigrants, slaves, etc.) would have provided better theoretical footing for the wide range of religious, social, and political issues that makes Morgan's writing so ambitious and exciting. In other words, a broader theory of image empowerment, not Protestant-inspired textual discourse, would have lent the volume more consistency and depth. Nevertheless, *The Sacred Gaze* contributes significantly to deconstructing the dominant aniconic discourse of religious studies.

PAMELA D. WINFIELD, *Meredith College*.

DANIELL, DAVID. *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003. xx+899 pp. \$40.00 (cloth).

To write about the history and influence of the English Bible in Great Britain and the United States is a foreboding task, one that requires both clarity and focus in the scope of the work and an engaging writing style that will keep the reader invested in what will necessarily be a long journey. Such a work on the English Bible is highly desirable as Anglophone culture becomes increasingly biblically illiterate. Unfortunately, this is not that book.

One of the book's most serious flaws is a lack of focus. This is a work of some eight hundred pages of text, in which the author blazes a meandering trail with no real destination. The result is that the journey too often becomes tedious, and readers will feel that they are going nowhere. The chapter on William Blake and Holman Hunt is a prime example of sections of this book where the reader is left wondering, "What does this really have to do with the English Bible?" Moreover, Daniell does not clearly lay out the criteria by which he will be assessing (often fiercely) the various translations and editions of the English Bible. One is left with the impression that the real criterion of excellence is some proximity to William Tyndale's version. In fact, this book is in one sense a book about William Tyndale and how his translation has never really been eclipsed. Daniell writes about the history of great men, or in this case, the one great man Tyndale, whose spirit dominates the entire narrative.

Daniell's lack of focus is compounded by an excruciatingly difficult style of writing. His prose is often labyrinthine, requiring several readings to decipher some of his sentences. Daniell praises Tyndale for his ability to produce prose

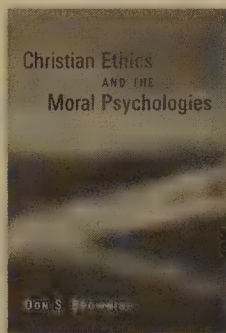
that was both euphonic and clear; the author and his editors should have endeavored to do the same for this book. As for the editing of this volume, in addition to the passages of torturous prose, there is an inexcusable abundance of typographical errors, particularly for an academic press such as Yale's.

More to the substance of this study, Daniell's analysis of persons and ideas suffers from a disturbing lack of evenhandedness that detracts from the overall credibility of the work. There is a lot of polemic in these pages, which is not necessarily a flaw, but Daniell's rhetorical vehemence can be counterproductive. He too often uses anecdotal evidence to dismissively dispatch what he disapproves. An example is his cheap shot at the Sixteenth Century Studies Society for allegedly ignoring the Bible (an absurd accusation). Daniell's battle against revisionist Reformation historians would be much more effective had he deployed less heated assertion and more measured argument. His penchant for dramatic hyperbole quickly grows tiresome. He frequently employs a double standard, praising *The Living Bible* paraphrase while savaging Eugene Peterson's *The Message* with excessive harshness.

Daniell's portrayal of the history of Christian thought is skewed and outdated. He presents a caricature of medieval theology and exegesis in which a good fifteen hundred years of Christian thought can be written off as superstition and ignorance. Daniell betrays his lack of insight into this era when he dismisses the fourfold method of interpretation but then praises its greatest practitioner, Nicholas of Lyra (because he was one of Tyndale's favorite exegeses). His treatment of John Calvin and later Protestant orthodoxy is similarly disappointing. Moreover, the confessional tone of his writing threatens to transgress the borders of civility. His treatment of Roman Catholic thought and attitudes toward the Bible is simplistic to say the least and comes disturbingly close to bigotry. Just as one-sided is his treatment of American Christianity, and particularly his facile treatment of southern American use of the Bible in the decades before the Civil War. Daniell makes no serious attempt to understand why a Catholic churchman in the sixteenth century might not favor a vernacular translation or to understand why a southern American clergyman might find justification for slavery in the Bible. Daniell also devotes exaggerated attention to sects that claim inspired status for the King James Version.

There are long stretches and even entire chapters of this work that are excellent, such as Daniell's examination of the Revised English Version. Yet Daniell pays scant attention to, or even ignores, many other important English translations, such as the New American Standard Bible. The author's carelessness with details and his tendentious judgments diminish this volume's contribution to the history of the English Bible, while his eccentric style and excessive prolixity will prevent many nonspecialists from finishing the massive tome. Regrettably, this is a study that disappoints much more than it delivers.

RAYMOND A. BLACKETER, *Neerlandia, Canada.*



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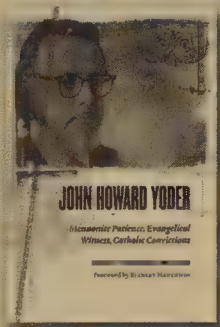
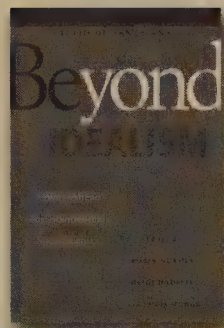
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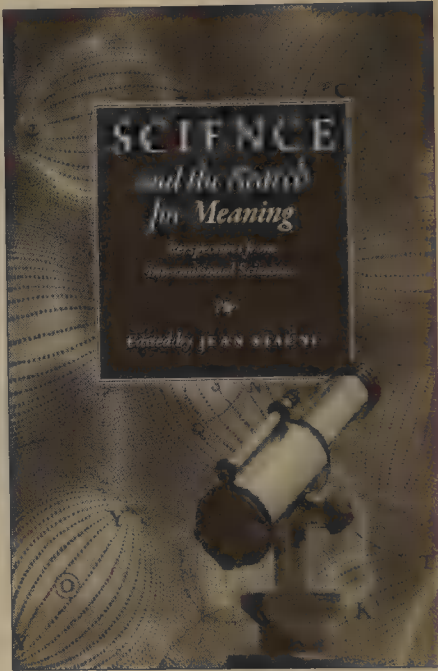


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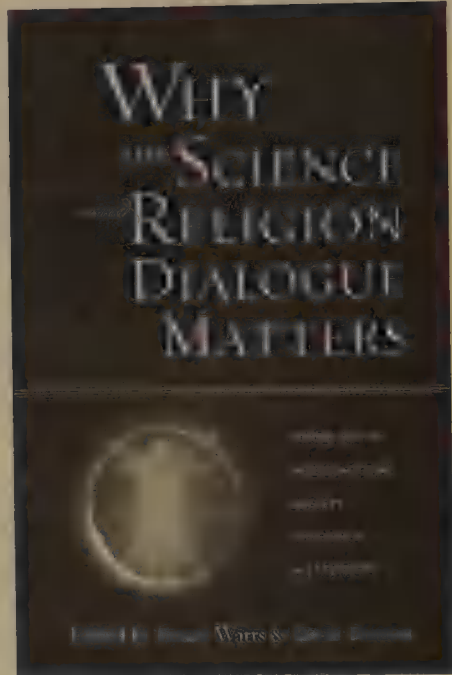
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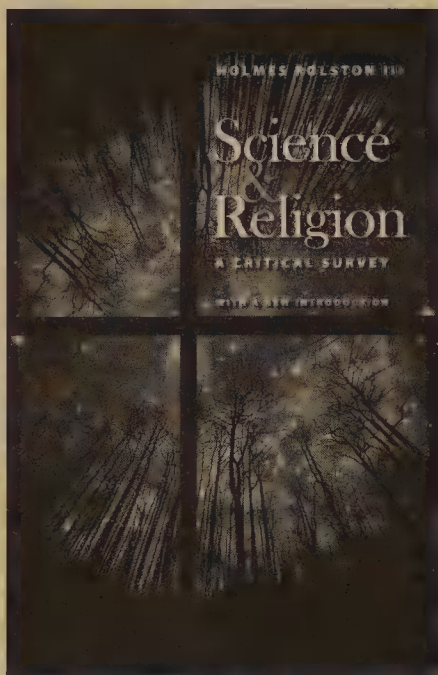
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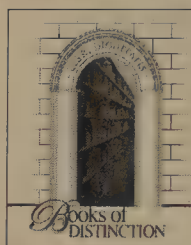
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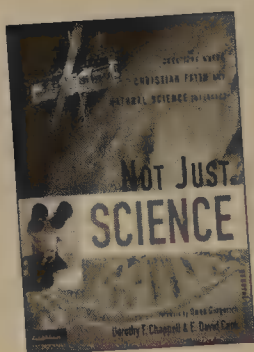
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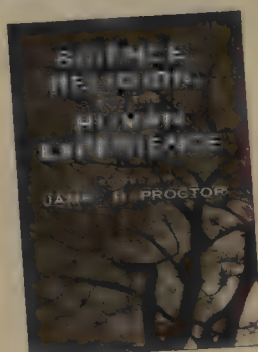
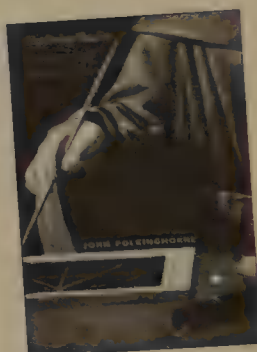
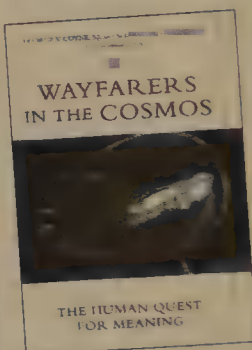
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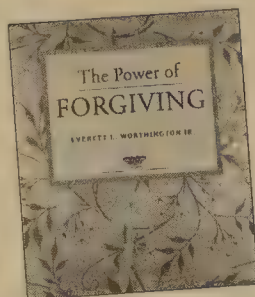
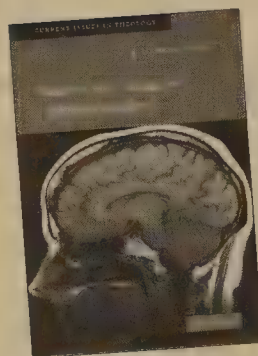
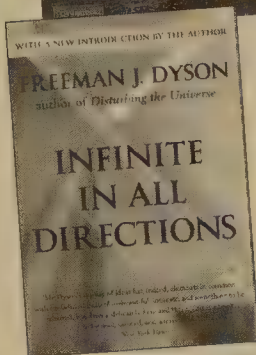
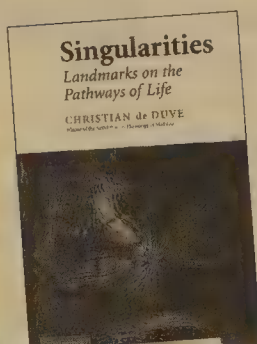
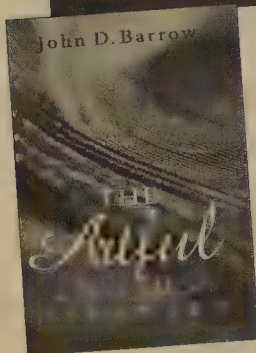
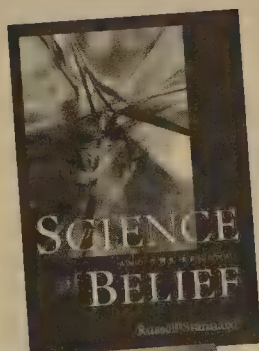
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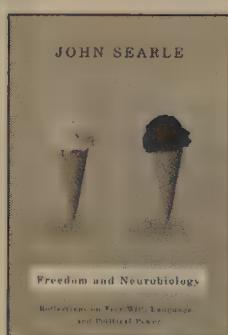


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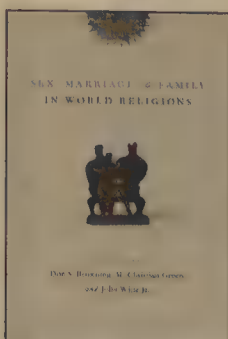
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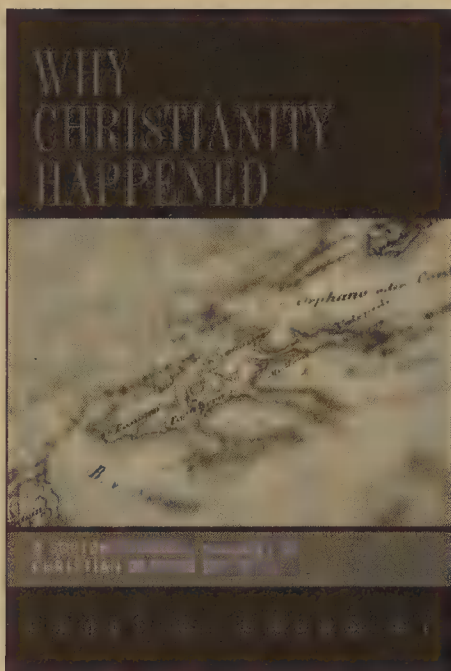
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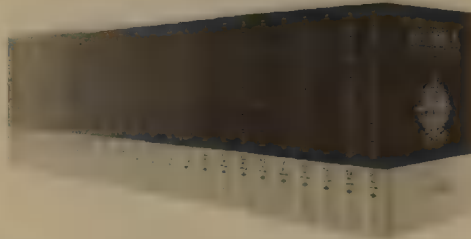
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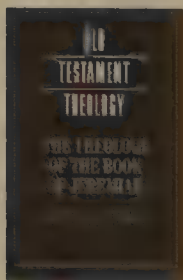
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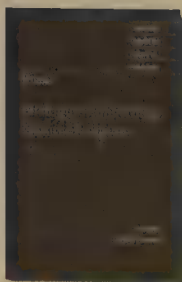
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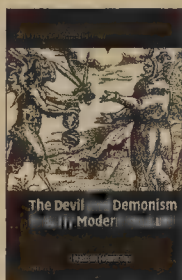
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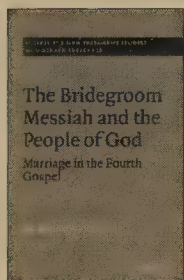
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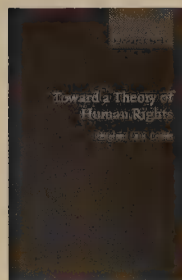
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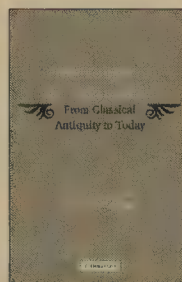
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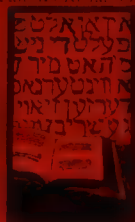
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The Family, the Gospel, and the Catholic Worker*

*Daniel McKanan / College of Saint Benedict/
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Can a family answer the radical call of the gospel? Is it possible, in other words, to take seriously Jesus's call to "turn the other cheek," share one's wealth, and "be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect," at the same time as one fulfills the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood?¹ Is it possible to follow one's religious idealism without sacrificing family? Throughout history, most Christians have answered negatively. Within the Roman Catholic tradition, the so-called counsels of perfection or evangelical counsels have generally been applied only to celibate religious orders. Indeed, the triad of "poverty, chastity, and obedience" has often been used as a summary of the counsels of perfection, while such gospel themes as nonviolence are downplayed. At various times and places, popular movements have promoted "apostolic life" for families as well as individuals, but in most cases these have evolved either into more conventional religious orders, like the Franciscans or Ursulines, or new sects, like the Waldensians or Hutterites. These latter groups, for their part, have continued to lift up the gospel ideal in theory, but in practice they have taken on an ethnic character, growing through natural increase rather than conversion. As a result, they do not provide a viable path to individuals from more conventional backgrounds who wish to combine gospel idealism and family life.

The history of radical Christianity in the United States suggests an

* Please see Daniel McKanan's *Touching the World: Christian Communities Transforming Society* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007) for a fuller discussion of the Catholic Worker movement.

¹ The New Testament texts that carry special authority for Catholic Workers and other gospel idealists include the Sermon on the Mount, especially the Beatitudes and the teaching on nonviolence; the list of the "works of mercy" included in the story of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25; the story of the rich young man (Matt. 19:16–26); and the account of the early church's practice of holding all things in common (Acts 2:42–47).

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equally discouraging conclusion. In the nineteenth century, for example, Christian idealism inspired a great many communal movements, but the most enduring of these—the Shakers, the Oneida Community, and early Mormonism—either repudiated or radically transformed family life.² (Other enduring movements, like the Amana Colonies and the Harmonists, drew their membership almost entirely from immigrants and had little appeal to the American mainstream.) Indeed, one nineteenth-century American communitarian, who had himself lived through the collapse of a community that affirmed family life, concluded that “the family is a rock against which all objects not only will dash in vain, but they will fall shivered at its base.”³

Despite this dire history, a new pattern of gospel-centered family life began to emerge in the twentieth century. Koinonia Farm in Americus, Georgia; Jubilee Partners in Comer, Georgia; Sojourners Community in Washington, DC; Reba Place in suburban Chicago; the Bruderhof in New York and Pennsylvania; and Jesus People USA in inner-city Chicago are just a few of the Christian communal groups that have included a majority or solid minority of families over the course of life spans stretching more than twenty-five years. One of the most conspicuous examples of this new trend is the Catholic Worker movement, an informal network of more than 150 small communities scattered across the United States and around the world.⁴ The Catholic Worker, I sug-

² One of the best overviews of American communal movements is Donald E. Pitzer, ed., *America's Communal Utopias* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

³ Nathan C. Meeker, “Post Mortem and Requiem, by an Old Fourierist,” *New York Tribune*, November 3, 1866, in John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1870), 507.

⁴ The scholarly literature on the Catholic Worker is impressive, although Day and the original New York community have been studied far more extensively than the movement as a whole. Standard biographies include William D. Miller, *Dorothy Day: A Biography* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1984); and Jim Forest, *Love Is the Measure: A Biography of Dorothy Day*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994). Mel Piehl's *Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origins of Catholic Radicalism in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982) and William D. Miller's *A Harsh and Dreadful Love: Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement* (New York: Liveright, 1973) are both general histories that explore the many communities founded during the Depression but were published too early to come to terms with the explosion of the movement since the late 1960s. Readers seeking a feel for the movement as it exists today will do better to start with two collections of essays—Patrick G. Coy, ed., *A Revolution of the Heart: Essays on the Catholic Worker* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), and William J. Thorn, Phillip Runkel, and Susan Mountin, eds., *Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001)—and above all with Rosalie Riegle Troester's outstanding oral history, *Voices from the Catholic Worker* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993). She published a subsequent oral history as Rosalie Riegle, *Dorothy Day: Portraits by Those Who Knew Her* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003). The ideals of the movement continue to be encapsulated in the writings of Dorothy Day, especially the frequently republished *Loaves and Fishes* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983), and *The Long Loneliness* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997). My own interpretation of the

gest, is one of the best examples of how contemporary Christians are reconciling their understanding of family life with a radical interpretation of the gospel.

The Catholic Worker movement has special significance for a number of reasons. It is a rapidly growing network rather than a freestanding community like most of the others just mentioned. It has maintained its lay identity while remaining in creative, if sometimes contentious, communion with the Roman Catholic hierarchy. It has consistently placed gospel idealism at the center of its identity; indeed, Catholic Workers often describe the Sermon on the Mount as their “manifesto.”⁵ And it has placed increasing emphasis on the connection between gospel idealism and family life, with most Catholic Worker gatherings now including formal and informal conversation about family life. Recent press coverage, moreover, has focused on the ways in which more and more people are “Finding Family at the Catholic Worker,” as one *National Catholic Reporter* article declared.⁶

Such coverage is misleading to the extent that it implies that Catholic Worker families have appeared only since the death of Dorothy Day. Although many Workers believe that “Dorothy didn’t give us models for families who want to minister to the poor, Catholic Worker style,” families have been part of the Worker movement since its beginnings in 1933.⁷ It is true that families rarely lived at the early Worker houses founded in the 1930s, but families were prominent in the circles of people that planned, funded, and volunteered at the early houses. Moreover, Day was clear from the beginning that one did not need to live at a Catholic Worker house to be part of the Catholic Worker movement. To be a Catholic Worker, she believed, was to revive the “lay apostolate” by practicing the works of mercy—feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and visiting those in prison—in whatever life circumstances one found oneself. For most families, that might mean simply opening up a spare bedroom or “Christ room” to whomever might need it. (This idea, which Day traced to the patristic bishop Saint John Chrysostom, was inspired by Jesus’s teaching that “whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” [Matt. 25:40].) The “reconstruction of social order,” Day wrote during the height of

Catholic Worker movement is developed more fully in *Touching the World: Christian Communities Transforming Society* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007).

⁵ See, e.g., Katherine Temple, “Our Manifesto: The Sermon on the Mount,” *Catholic Worker* 54, no. 3 (May 1987): 2.

⁶ Margot Paterson, “Finding Family at the Catholic Worker,” *National Catholic Reporter*, March 7, 2003.

⁷ Julia Occhiogrosso, cited in Sharon Abercrombie, “Catholic Worker: Can It Work as a Family Activity?” *National Catholic Reporter*, October 29, 1999.

the Depression, depended “less on trade unions, co-operatives, and communes” than on “the re-creation of the Catholic family, that micro-cosm of society and type of the Mystical Body.”⁸

Day’s reference to the “Mystical Body” is significant, for her vision for the Worker (individuals associated with the Catholic Worker movement often refer to that movement as simply “the Worker”) was influenced not only by the church’s social encyclicals but also by the liturgical movement of the early twentieth century. Liturgical reformers like Virgil Michel, OSB, placed especially strong emphasis on the ancient doctrine that all Christians, both lay and ordained, participate in Christ’s body; they believed that a full and active participation in the Eucharist would empower laypeople to transform the larger society according to gospel ideals. Day seems to have derived many of her ideas about the Mystical Body and the “lay apostolate” from Michel’s writings (sometimes as interpreted by her cofounder Peter Maurin), and Michel in turn promoted the Worker as one of “many groups that are forming as living cells of true Christian life.” Michel also shared her views on the centrality of the family to the lay apostolate: “the family,” he wrote in 1937, was “not merely a distant imitation . . . of the mystical body, but a concentrated form of it”—so much so that “everything parents do as parents is an exercise of their participation in Christ’s priestly powers.”⁹

Such views began to be vindicated by the hierarchical church in the 1940s and 1950s. Pius XII cautiously endorsed Mystical Body theology in his 1943 encyclical, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, and sponsored a series of World Congresses on the Lay Apostolate beginning in 1951.¹⁰ New movements, including the Young Christian Workers, Young Christian Students, the Grail, the National Catholic Rural Life Movement, and the Christian Family Movement joined the Worker in carrying the banner of the lay apostolate.¹¹ And families moved closer to the center of the Worker movement itself during the postwar years. Most early houses

⁸ Dorothy Day, “The Family vs. Capitalism,” *Catholic Worker* 3, no. 8 (January 1936): 4.

⁹ Virgil Michel, OSB, “Christian Reconstruction Cells,” *Orate Fratres* 11, no. 4 (February 21, 1937): 179, and “The Family and the Mystical Body,” *Orate Fratres* 11, no. 7 (May 16, 1937): 295, 298.

¹⁰ For an overview of the theology of the lay apostolate in the twentieth century, see David O’Shea, “The Lay Movement in Roman Catholicism—Developments in the Lay Apostolate,” *Religion in Life* 31, no. 1 (Winter 1961–62): 56–67.

¹¹ For an examination of one movement, see Jeffrey M. Burns, *Disturbing the Peace: A History of the Christian Family Movement, 1949–1974* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999). Leo Richard Ward, CSC, *The American Apostolate: American Catholics in the Twentieth Century* (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1952), is a postwar publication that gives a vivid sense of the interrelations among these movements and includes an essay by Catholic Worker leader (and father) Julian Pleasants.

of hospitality folded during World War II, either because their leaders objected to Day's strong stand against war or because the wartime economic boom reduced the need. Yet two of those that survived for years after the war, in Detroit and Cleveland, were able to do so because they were anchored by families who had made a long-term commitment to the work. In Detroit, Lou and Justine Murphy sustained two houses of hospitality and a small farm while raising six children, and Day explicitly identified them as a model of how "a family can undertake works of mercy and raise their own children in a slum, not only without their being contaminated, but on the contrary demonstrating an ability to lift the level of intelligence and awareness of the other children in the neighborhood."¹² In Cleveland, Dorothy and Bill Gauchat began similarly but gradually shifted their efforts to care for children with developmental disabilities. Their community at "Our Lady of the Wayside" ultimately grew into a multimillion dollar nonprofit serving 182 residents in forty-one distinct households. By that time, however, Dorothy Gauchat had started over, providing small-scale, Catholic Worker style care to infants with AIDS.¹³

During the postwar years, moreover, the movement's agrarian ethos, which held that the solution to the evils of industrialism was for families to return to self-sufficient life on the land, took on increasing prominence. Though the New York Catholic Worker continued to be a community of mostly single adults working directly with the urban poor, the newspaper publicized both the agrarian theories of Gandhi, E. F. Schumacher, and Helen and Scott Nearing and the agrarian practices of dozens of families that had been inspired by Maurin's call for a "green revolution." It might not be too much to say that between World War II and the Vietnam War, the Catholic Worker movement outside of New York was primarily rural and familial in character.

Despite this long legacy, contemporary Worker families are right to see their activities as something new, both in the history of the Worker movement and in the larger history of attempts to embody a radical gospel. Since the late 1960s, the Worker movement has experienced a period of sustained growth, to the extent that it is far larger today than it was during its early peak in the 1930s. Dozens of Worker communities today have been in existence for twenty or thirty years, while only a handful of the original communities achieved such longevity. Families

¹² Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 197.

¹³ Dorothy Gauchat, interview by Rosalie Riegle Troester, January 20, 1988, Dorothy Day—Catholic Worker Collection, Raynor Memorial Libraries, Marquette University, Milwaukee (hereafter "Day/CW"), series W-9, box 4, folder 17; Dorothy Gauchat, *All God's Children* (New York: Hawthorn, 1976); and <http://www.thewayside.org>.

have been one key to this new pattern of steady commitment. Moreover, there is a new consciousness among today's Worker families that the Worker needs families and families need the Worker. This consciousness, which reflects the changing circumstances of family life in the United States as much as it does the evolution of the Worker movement, is a new contribution both to the Worker and to the larger Christian understanding of the character of discipleship.¹⁴

THE FLOWERING OF CATHOLIC WORKER FAMILIES

"It is interesting to see young families in charge of houses of hospitality," wrote Dorothy Day in 1967, noting the efforts of Dave and Kathy Miller in Washington, DC, Mike and Nettie Cullen in Milwaukee, and John and Kathe McKenna in Boston, as well as the more established work of the Murphys and Gauchats. "It is a harder and more realistic approach, this family leadership, and there is less room for pride and dissipation of energy. But it is a most particular vocation, and certainly none should undertake it without a vocation."¹⁵ Her words reflected the fact that, after decades of faithful witnessing, the Catholic Worker movement was growing again, and the number of Worker families was growing commensurately. Yet the spectrum of family possibilities remained surprisingly similar to that established in the 1950s. A greatly increased number of families chose, like the Murphys, to anchor urban houses of hospitality; like the Murphys, most of these families discovered that family and hospitality could be reconciled only through constant tinkering and renegotiation. Others embraced the agrarian ideal, usually discovering that a family farm was much easier to sustain than a full-scale farming commune. Still others took to heart Day's conviction that while all are called to follow a radical gospel, full-time hospitality work is not everyone's vocation. These families demonstrated remarkable creativity in forging models of life that were halfway between the Catholic Worker stereotype and the conventional nuclear family.

The new growth was part of the larger cultural ferment of the late

¹⁴ My own understanding of the contemporary Catholic Worker movement has been shaped largely by the interviews and participant observation I conducted at around ten Catholic Worker communities between 2000 and 2005. Individuals who are quoted in this article have been given the opportunity to review and, if necessary, amend the quotations; I have also asked them if they prefer to be quoted anonymously or by name. When they have not expressed a preference, I have chosen to quote them by name as a way of honoring their individual contributions to the Catholic Worker movement. Unless otherwise noted, I interviewed all of these individuals.

¹⁵ Dorothy Day, "On Pilgrimage," *Catholic Worker* 33, no. 5 (February 1967): 6.

1960s, and many of the new Catholic Worker families got their start in the struggle against the Vietnam War. Dave and Kathy Miller started Saint James Catholic Worker House shortly before Dave's trial for draft-card burning. Brendan Walsh and Willa Bickham lived with the Millers before starting Viva House in Baltimore, where their first guests included members of the Catonsville Nine, who were imprisoned for draft file burning. Mike Cullen, who had cofounded Casa Maria in Milwaukee a few years earlier with his wife Nettie, was part of the Milwaukee Fourteen and was extradited to Ireland as a consequence. Dan and Chris Delany made draft counseling a central part of the early mission of the Ammon Hennacy House of Hospitality in Los Angeles. All of these families had close ties to Phil Berrigan and Liz McAlister, who began raising their own children at Jonah House, a "resistance" community that was not formally part of the Catholic Worker movement but became an important inspiration for Catholic Worker families. (Indeed, the Los Angeles house even named its "Resistance Center" for the Berrigans.)¹⁶ Still, involvement with the newer resistance movement did not prevent these families from drawing on the accumulated wisdom of earlier Worker families: Mike Cullen conducted a detailed interview with Lou Murphy during his visit to Detroit, while the Walsh-Bickhams spent their honeymoon visiting the Murphys, Cullens, and other Catholic Worker houses.¹⁷

The new Worker houses established in the late 1960s evolved in a variety of directions. Saint James House closed shortly after David Miller's imprisonment, though subsequent Worker houses in Washington, DC, sometimes included families. After the Cullens' departure from Casa Maria and the McKennas' temporary move from Haley House, those communities shifted somewhat toward the singles-oriented model of the New York Catholic Worker, though both included other families at various times. In Baltimore, meanwhile, the Walsh-Bickhams developed what is now one of the most common models of Worker communities. They have shared Viva House with a stream of short-term volunteers, but their steady presence has anchored the community for nearly four decades. This has been possible, in large part, because of what Willa has called their "flowing attitude toward our Catholic Worker work." Taking to heart Day's principle that families should not subsist on donations intended for the poor, they have taken turns holding out-

¹⁶ Dan Delany and Chris Delany, "Los Angeles," *Catholic Worker* 37, no. 6 (July–August 1971): 6.

¹⁷ Interview with Willa Bickham and Brendan Walsh, May 25, 2000; Willa Bickham, interview by Rosalie Riegle Troester, November 7, 1987, Day/CW, series W-9, box 3; Kathleen McKenna, interview by Rosalie Riegle Troester, June 9, 1988, Day/CW, series W-9, box 6, folder 9.

side jobs to provide for family needs. They have also shifted the balance between their soup kitchen, which serves dozens of people a day, and overnight hospitality for smaller numbers of homeless persons in order to accommodate changing family needs. This flexibility allowed them to provide their daughter with such a positive experience that she chose to begin her own family at Viva House, where both she and her husband were able to craft new ministries—an after-school program for children and a legal clinic—in keeping with their own vocations.¹⁸

Other houses on this model were quick to spring up, some inspired directly by the Catholic Worker movement and others growing out of more spontaneous impulses toward hospitality. In 1973, the *Catholic Worker* asked for new houses of hospitality to identify themselves, and Betty and Charley Gifford of Memphis replied in typical fashion. “May we humbly apply to be considered as such and be placed on your list?” they wrote. “We are a family (husband and wife and three children still at home—four other children have gone on their own) in a small, three bedroom house. We have shared this house during the past five years with a variety of persons of all colors and all races and faiths, whom God has sent to us. Some have stayed for months (one is still with us after two years), others have stayed for a night or two.” The Giffords made clear that they were already part of an informal network of like-minded folks, adding that both their daughter’s family and a nearby priest were also doing hospitality and wished to be included on the list. By 1981, their work had expanded to include three houses (at least intermittently), though they still emphasized Day’s value of “smallness” and had taken as their motto, “We’re going as slowly as we can.”¹⁹

The family-anchored Catholic Worker house has proven especially successful in smaller cities, where it is possible to provide free meals and overnight hospitality without being overwhelmed by the need. In many cases, couples meet at large, urban houses of hospitality, then move closer to extended family, and open their own house when they begin to have children. This was the experience, for example, of Scott and Claire Schaeffer-Duffy, who met at one of the Worker houses in Washington, DC, and have been raising their family for roughly twenty years at Saints Francis and Thérèse Catholic Worker in Worcester, Massachusetts. They in turn inspired Chris Allen-Doucot, who volunteered with them during his student years before his family cofounded Saint

¹⁸ Interview with Brendan Walsh and Willa Bickham, May 25, 2000; Willa Bickham, interview by Rosalie Riegle Troester, November 7, 1987, Day/CW, series W-9, box 3, folder 3.

¹⁹ Betty and Charley Gifford, “Tenn.-Miss.,” *Catholic Worker* 39, no. 4 (May 1973): 6; Betty Gifford, “Tennessee,” *Catholic Worker* 47, no. 4 (May 1981): 4.

Martin de Porres House in Hartford, Connecticut. The two families continue to cooperate regularly in their antiwar resistance and to compete playfully for new community members.

On the West Coast, many family-oriented Worker houses can trace their roots to the large Worker community in Los Angeles, which had itself been founded by Dan and Chris Delany shortly after the birth of their first child.²⁰ Seattle's Family Kitchen, for example, was founded in 1974 by two families with previous ties to the Los Angeles Worker, and they received financial help from the Los Angeles community in purchasing their first house. For founders Larry and Alice Ray-Keil, a deliberately family-friendly Worker community was attractive because it allowed each parent to balance work and family responsibilities. Prior to the move, recalled Larry, "it was obvious Alice was being home with the kids too much, and I was working too much, so when we moved up here, we decided we were going to change that. We were each going to work part-time."²¹ Several years later, a conflict at the Los Angeles Worker persuaded several members that they had grown too large to sustain the Worker traditions of community and personalist hospitality. Rather than growing larger, explained Julia Occhiogrosso, who founded the Las Vegas Catholic Worker, "we needed to grow out and start other communities." Another couple, Jonathan and Rio Betz Parfrey, spent three years raising their young children at the Los Angeles house, as a preparation for the work of founding the Orange County Catholic Worker.²² More recently, the Redwood City Catholic Worker has provided "massive housing subsidies" to three couples in order to help them sustain Worker houses in the expensive San Francisco Bay area.²³

In several cities, Catholic Worker "communities" actually consist of clusters of family households, each doing its own sort of hospitality while cooperating in resistance work or running a soup kitchen. In Portland, Oregon, for example, Pat and Mufti McNasser began doing hospitality in their home in 1968, though it was several years before they formally identified themselves as Catholic Workers. During the 1970s, their example inspired several other families to join them in

²⁰ Dan Delany and Chris Delany, "Hennacy House," *Catholic Worker* 37, no. 3 (March–April 1971): 4.

²¹ Larry Ray-Keil, interview by Rosalie Riegle Troester, W-9, box 7; Keith D. Barger, "Hearing the Cry of the Poor: The Catholic Worker Communities in Oregon and Washington 1940 to the Present" (Senior thesis, University of Portland, 1992), Day/CW, series W-7.1, box 4, folder 5, pp. 35–36.

²² Occhiogrosso, cited in Troester, *Voices*, 464; and Rio Betz Parfrey, interview by Rosalie Riegle Troester, November 11, 1987, Day/CW, series W-9, box 7, folder 3.

²³ Larry Purcell to Dan McKanan, April 22, 2005.

renting houses on a "block" that had once been occupied by an urban commune. For more than a decade they ran a common soup kitchen; raised turkeys, rabbits, and chickens; regularly engaged in civil disobedience at military facilities; and developed a style of Worker life that was both celebratory and family friendly.²⁴ The Catholic Worker community of Saint Martin de Porres, in San Francisco, was founded by a cluster of single people but evolved in a similar direction after several of the founders married. Each family maintained a private apartment while participating in shared hospitality, and members pooled rent money to allow some to pursue outside vocations while others devoted themselves to full-time community work.²⁵

Yet another model is for a group of families to sustain a house of hospitality as "extended community," with a series of short-term volunteers providing live-in staffing. Like every model of Catholic Worker, this doesn't always work. A fledgling house in Saint Paul, Minnesota, for example, recently closed because it was unable to maintain a consistent enough staffing pattern. In LaCrosse, Wisconsin, by contrast, Place of Grace Catholic Worker has thrived with the support of several families that also maintain traditional homes and careers. In part, this is because the founding families had well-established friendships before beginning the project. Though they do not spend their nights at the house, these families spend several afternoons a week there, and this contributes greatly to a sense of common purpose that is then shared with the guests who receive hospitality.

The Catholic Worker tradition of family farming has also remained strong, although those who have aspired to create full-scale communal farms or the "agronomic universities" proposed by Maurin have generally been disappointed. Throughout the 1970s, gay couple Sandy Adams and Chuck Smith anchored the Catholic Worker farm in West Hamlin, West Virginia, regularly publishing agricultural advice for other Workers; on occasion, they playfully demonstrated against urban Workers who refused to take the agrarian vision seriously. In Quebec, the Creskey family established Saint Joseph Farm with several others but found themselves alone within a few months. After several years of family farming interspersed with more communal interludes, Jim Creskey wrote that their isolation had helped them "recognize that if the Lord has laid any definite responsibility on us it has to do with our family, and so it is as a family that we must address ourselves to the ideals we are struggling to realize. . . . The life of the family should be the health of the com-

²⁴ Barger, "Hearing the Cry of the Poor," 19–33.

²⁵ Elizabeth Flynn, "Catholic Worker Spirituality: A Sect within a Church" (MA thesis, Graduate Theological Union, 1974), Day/CW, series W-7.1, box 3, folder 9, pp. 91–93.

munity.”²⁶ A similar vision is sustained today by Brian Terrell and Betsy Keenan, who founded Strangers and Guests Catholic Worker Farm after several years at the Davenport Catholic Worker. They have been especially vocal in promoting the idea that Catholic Worker farms need not be auxiliary to urban houses of hospitality but have their own task in revitalizing the farm economy and rural culture.²⁷

Even more numerous, though hard to quantify, are the families that are offering Catholic Worker-style hospitality without formally declaring themselves as Catholic Workers. From the mid-1960s through the late 1970s, for example, the Baroni family of Natchez, Mississippi, supported the civil rights movement, participated in civil disobedience, and opened their home to both white and black individuals who needed a place to stay. “We all live here in peace and harmony,” wrote son Neil to Dorothy Day in 1977, “but as individuals.”²⁸

The families that have taken seriously Day’s call to open a “Christ room” to one individual in need of shelter include many people who were involved in formal houses of hospitality prior to their marriages. In Worcester, Massachusetts, for example, Mike and Diane Boover have “translated” the values Mike learned at the Mustard Seed Catholic Worker into the context of a single-family home. Like several other households in Worcester, they have hosted homeless individuals for months at a time, and they regularly invite both friends from their parish and former Mustard Seed guests to share meals. To make the Catholic Worker work for families, Mike explained, “you need to grant the vision some room.”²⁹

FAMILIES AND THE WORKER: RECIPROCAL GIFTS

Contemporary Catholic Worker families differ more in quantity than in structure from the pioneering families of the 1950s and 1960s. But they also differ in attitude. The frequent complaints about Dorothy Day’s lack of support for families may reflect a one-sided memory of Day herself. But the larger significance of these complaints is that they express a new conviction that families and the Worker need one another. Day seems to have believed that the Worker movement was good and necessary and that families were good and necessary but that neither one required the other. If some people could combine the two, that was great, but not necessary. Many Catholic Worker families, by

²⁶ Jim Creskey, “Saint Joseph Farm,” *Catholic Worker* 43, no. 5 (June 1977): 4.

²⁷ Brian Terrell, interview by Chris Gamm, August 19, 2000.

²⁸ Neil Baroni to Dorothy Day, *Catholic Worker* 43, no. 2 (February 1977): 7.

²⁹ Interview with Mike Boover, January 6, 2002.

contrast, believe, on the one hand, that the Catholic Worker cannot fulfill its mission of reviving the lay apostolate without families and, on the other, that families cannot defend themselves from individualism and consumerism without the support of the Catholic Worker movement. Since the late 1960s, these paired convictions have in turn inspired Catholic Worker families to organize a wide range of retreats, conferences, and newsletters to explore and promote what they see as the “new” ideal of the Catholic Worker family.³⁰

This new sense of mutual necessity reflects changes in both the Catholic Church and the larger American culture. At the Second Vatican Council, Day’s understanding of the role of laypeople in the Mystical Body of Christ was resoundingly vindicated both in the ecclesiological document *Lumen Christi* and in a decree devoted entirely to the “Apostolate of the Laity.” Echoing the words of both Day and Michel, the bishops identified the family as “the primary vital cell of society” and urged each family not only to function as a domestic church but also to “offer active hospitality, practice justice and other good works for the benefit of all its brothers suffering from want.”³¹ Because Day was widely recognized as a pioneer of this new theology of the laity, the bishops’ words helped her movement recruit a new generation of volunteers, and many of these volunteers sensed that a lay apostolate would not be worthy of the name if it did not fully embrace family life.

At the same time, both Catholics and other Americans were sensing that the family was “in crisis,” both because of rising divorce rates and (somewhat later) because of society’s failure to replace the nurturing labors of mothers who moved into the paid workforce. For most contemporary Catholic Workers, this sense of crisis is exacerbated by a concern that that contemporary society promotes militarist and consumerist values rather than nonviolence and sharing. Many believe that Catholic Worker communities provide the only, or at least the best, place to create the sort of nurturing environment that families could take for granted a few generations ago. “I look at intentional communities now as the place of refuge,” said Marcia Timmel, cofounder of the Olive Branch Catholic Worker in Washington, DC, “as the healthiest possible place.”³² Larry Purcell of the Redwood City Catholic Worker developed a similar idea in his contribution to a newsletter on

³⁰ Mike Cullen (“Casa Maria,” *Catholic Worker* 34, no. 2 [February 1968]: 4) describes one of the first of these gatherings; a much larger gathering in 1999 led to the publication of *Family Life in the Catholic Worker Movement*, a single-issue newsletter that offers an eloquent manifesto for Catholic Worker families.

³¹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, par. 11, in Austin Flannery, OP, *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, new rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 779.

³² Cited in Troester, *Voices*, 291–92.

Catholic Worker families. "I believe that being part of a loving family for a long time is one of the more radical political acts possible," he wrote. "Family dinners, faithful love, dear friendships, constant support in sickness, sharing life, enduring death together—these and other values are central to family and crucial to Catholic Worker communities. These simple values that are the foundation of love are disappearing all around us."³³

For many Catholic Worker parents, this sense that families need the Catholic Worker was reinforced by their experience of civil disobedience and other forms of antiwar "resistance" work. Especially during the height of the Vietnam War, resistance activities often had an intensity that made parenting simply unthinkable. Some activists argued that it was irresponsible to bring children into a violent and unjust world. But others, including some of the most dedicated war resisters, concluded that intentional community provided a basis for combining the vocation of parenting with resistance. At Baltimore's Jonah House, a community that is close to but not officially part of the Worker movement, Berrigan and McAlister realized that a community could provide the sort of support that would allow individual parents to serve jail terms for civil disobedience without imposing all the burdens of single parenthood on their partners. Though not all Catholic Worker parents choose to do civil disobedience, a great many have drawn inspiration from Jonah House's model of community-supported parenting. "It was watching how the children were being raised at Jonah House," reflected Timmel, "that gave me the nerve to think that I could even *consider* parenting."³⁴

Catholic Worker parents are thus quick to identify the benefits that community life can have for their children. Many, for example, rely on the experience of living with poor or oppressed persons to instill compassionate values in their children. "To me," said Larry Purcell, "the trick is to love your kids so much that you want what you have for them with the homeless. Not like you want to treat your kids like you treat the homeless, but that you want the homeless to have what your kids have."³⁵ Michele Naar-Obed, who has spent several years in prison or jail for civil disobedience, said that "it's very important that [my daughter] experience one way or another what most of the world experiences in terms of living with people that are marginalized, or having one of her parents in prison, and . . . hearing first hand about other families

³³ Larry Purcell, "Reflections of a Catholic Worker Dad," *Family Life in the Catholic Worker Movement* 1, no. 1 (May 2001): 17.

³⁴ Cited in Troester, *Voices*, 291–92.

³⁵ Larry Purcell, interview by Chris Gamm, July 14, 2000.

that are imprisoned and why.”³⁶ And Chris Allen-Doucot, whose Saint Martin de Porres Catholic Worker is in an impoverished African American neighborhood in Hartford, contrasted his children’s experiences with those of their cousins. “Their cousins, on both sides, are all being raised in very white middle-class places. They don’t have friends that are black or Hispanic or poor. Our children do. But our children also have friends that are white or middle class or wealthy. So I hope that they’re benefitting from exposure to different cultures and different classes—because I think every culture has something to offer us.”³⁷

Chris also suggested that the benefits his children have derived from community life have made it easier for the grandparents to accept the more radical aspects of Worker ideology. “My parents,” he explained, “are still not too thrilled about this lifestyle, about living here. But one of the things they do appreciate about this lifestyle is that Jackie and I are both home almost all the time with our kids. They’re not being raised in a day-care center [like their cousins]. . . . They’re being raised by us.”³⁸ For Walsh and Bickham of Baltimore’s Viva House, by contrast, the presence of community in both the house and the neighborhood softened the challenges of raising an only child. “We could never have had only one child,” says Willa, “if we didn’t live in a community with other children. It would have been too hard.” Thirty years later, Kate was raising her own children at Viva House, and the neighbors continued to treat her as part of the family. “All the people who work here, the people who come to eat, the homeless, the neighbors, they all [came to] celebrate Kate and Dave’s wedding,” said Willa. And “when Maya was born, we had great cupcakes—that’s a real treat for folks . . . balloons and banners and everything up and everybody knew and was awaiting the birth of Kate and Dave’s baby. A lot of people in the soup kitchen brought little gifts, some used gifts and some Dollar Store gifts.”³⁹

That sense of extended family has also been important to Carla Dawson, who came to the Des Moines Catholic Worker as a guest and stayed on to become what community cofounder Frank Cordaro calls the community’s “franchise player.” Raising her children in community with other single moms “was a big plus” she explained, “because we always watched each others’ kids, we always did things together.” The experience broadened Carla’s understanding of the word “family.” “I still find the term that most people use for families so shallow,” she

³⁶ Interview with Michele Naar-Obed, August 24, 2002.

³⁷ Interview with Chris Allen-Doucot, January 4, 2002.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Interview with Joanne Kennedy, May 25, 2000.

explained. "Like Eddie's in my family. We have no blood ties whatsoever, but he's like my kids' uncle. . . . And Irving who's no relation to them, is probably like a father. . . . He saved my son Josh, because Josh had his days and nights mixed up when he was born, and my son Julius had just started kindergarten. I was kind of crazy for six months because I didn't have enough sleep. . . . And Irving used to get him, get him his bottle, change his diaper."⁴⁰

Unlike Carla, Joanne Kennedy was raised in the "lower upper class" of Southern California, "where we had enough money to always be comfortable and too much time on our hands to worry about things that aren't that important." As a result, she had a lot to learn from Carla when they lived together in Des Moines. "Carla's a parent for these kids' lives," Joanne explained. "She's got to face some really tough things. She's got to teach her kids some lessons I don't even know how to teach, about what it means to be black in America, what it means to be poor and black in America, and what it means to be without a father and poor and black in America. What the hell do I know? So I learned a lot about . . . [how] you just sort of deal with everything each day as it comes." These contrasting experiences served Joanne well as she raised her own son Jonah in the intensely communal environment of the New York Catholic Worker.⁴¹

As these examples of crossing class boundaries suggest, yet another advantage of growing up in the Catholic Worker is that one gains the ability to thrive in a variety of social contexts. This advantage is ironic, given outsiders' frequently expressed worry that Catholic Worker parents "impose" their own countercultural values on their children. "Whatever you do," Catholic Worker parent Brian Terrell acknowledged, "adults impose their lives on their kids." But he went on to contrast the Catholic Worker with both mainstream society and movements like the Amish that reject that society wholesale. "Our kids . . . know enough about the real world . . . [of] normal folks with normal aspirations and everything—if they want it they can join it, and they would have the tools to do okay in it. . . . I don't know what our kids are going to decide but I think they're going to make those decisions knowing a lot more options than a lot of other folks will."⁴²

Like many Catholic Worker parents, Brian moved quickly from appreciation of his own experiences to concern about the prospects for other American families. "The problem today," he explained, "is not that the nuclear family's fallen apart." The nuclear family itself is "an

⁴⁰ Carla Dawson, interview by Chris Gamm, August 20, 2000.

⁴¹ Interview with Joanne Kennedy, May 23, 2000.

⁴² Brian Terrell, interview by Chris Gamm, August 19, 2000.

experiment that's failed" because it has cut families off from supportive communities. "It's the mess from that experiment that we're dealing with."⁴³ Similarly, Timmel, reflecting on the way that Day's experience as a parent shaped her attitudes about families in the Worker, told Rosalie Riegle Troester that "the sort of life that I think Dorothy would have liked for Tamar, and that she encouraged Catholic Workers in an earlier age to try to provide for their children, doesn't exist in America today. I don't know if it ever existed. But to the extent that this fairy-tale ideal of the good life for children is aspired to, what we end up raising is a generation of very self-absorbed citizens."⁴⁴ And mainstream kids, wrote Larry Holben, live in a "soulless culture" that lacks deeply meaningful stories, while "Catholic Worker parents have a multitude of stories to tell their children, not only the stories of Peter and Dorothy and other figures in the movement's history, but the stories of the lives of the guests that have passed through their communities. These stories are the flesh and bone of the rich personalist heritage Catholic Worker parents have to pass on to their children."⁴⁵ The Catholic Worker commitment to storytelling is evident both in the writings of Day, which are filled with personal anecdotes, and in the pages of the *Catholic Worker*, which often features semihagiographic studies of key figures in the movement or personal heroes of Day or Maurin. One recent study of the movement, Mark and Louise Zwick's *The Catholic Worker Movement: Intellectual and Spiritual Origins* (New York: Paulist, 2005), takes Day's fascination with exemplary figures from the past as its starting point.

Though Catholic Worker parents are filled with appreciation of the benefits they and their children have received, they are also quick to insist that the movement needs them as much as they need it. In part, this conviction reflects the wide acceptance of the "lay apostolate" among contemporary Catholics. "Certainly the Catholic Worker is an important lay movement in this country," explained Occhiogrosso of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker. "To be a lay movement and exclude family in the expressions of the lifestyle is to cut off a vital limb. . . . No longer can we leave the movement because we do not meet self-or-

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Cited in Troester, *Voices*, 292.

⁴⁵ Larry Holben, "Family Life and the Catholic Worker," *Family Life in the Catholic Worker Movement* 1, no. 1 (May 2001): 15. The Catholic Worker commitment to storytelling is evident both in the writings of Day, which are filled with personal anecdotes, and in the pages of the *Catholic Worker*, which often features semihagiographic studies of key figures in the movement or personal heroes of Day or Maurin. One recent study of the movement, Mark and Louise Zwick's *The Catholic Worker Movement: Intellectual and Spiritual Origins* (New York: Paulist, 2005), takes Day's fascination with exemplary figures from the past as its starting point.

other-imposed expectations. There is too great a need for people to live alternative values to what are espoused by the prevailing culture. Perhaps a time is coming where we can lay out expanded assumptions that address the particular needs of family life in the movement."⁴⁶

The new emphasis on the connection between family life and the lay apostolate has come at a time of ongoing crisis for Catholic religious orders, and that crisis has also contributed to the proliferation of Catholic Worker families. A remarkable number of the pioneers and theorists of the new Catholic Worker families—including Walsh, Bickham, Purcell, Scott Schaeffer-Duffy, and Bob Lassalle-Klein—are ex-seminarians or former members of religious orders. The idea of a lay apostolate, equally distinct from religious life and mainstream family life, appeals to these individuals as a way of preserving the values that drew them to religious life in the first place. When Saint Martin de Porres Catholic Worker was founded in San Francisco by a group that included several ex-religious, they hoped to create a family-friendly community that would become the alternative to religious orders. "They feel that religious orders are going to fail," reported researcher Elizabeth Flynn at the time, "and the Catholic Worker anticipates this development by breaking down the traditional barriers between lay and religious life."⁴⁷ This rather stark way of putting it reflects the context of the 1970s, however: since that time the religious orders themselves have joined in the process of breaking down boundaries by sponsoring oblate, associate, and volunteer programs that invite laypeople to participate more fully in their community life.⁴⁸ Today, many Catholic Worker families draw freely on the resources and legacy of the traditional orders. Individuals move in both directions between the orders and the Worker, and more than a few maintain membership in religious orders while living in Worker communities.

The benefits families bring to the Catholic Worker reach beyond the broad ideals of the lay apostolate into the nitty-gritty details of Catholic Worker hospitality. The practices of nurture that are staples of family life, for example, can easily overflow to infuse an entire community with nurturing care. Day herself recalled that Saint Theresa of Avila

⁴⁶ Julia Occhiogrosso, "Reflections of a Catholic Worker Mom," *Family Life in the Catholic Worker Movement* 1, no. 1 (May 2001): 26.

⁴⁷ Flynn, "Catholic Worker Spirituality," 90, 122.

⁴⁸ Barbara Schneiders, OSF, "Sisters and Brothers: An Evolved and Evolving Religious Life," in *The Catholic Church in the Twentieth Century*, ed. John Deedy (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2000), 49–50. For a broadly theoretical study of contemporary religious orders, see Sandra M. Schneiders, IHM, *Finding the Treasure: Locating Catholic Religious Life in a New Ecclesial and Cultural Context* (New York: Paulist, 2000), and *Selling All: Commitment, Consecrated Celibacy, and Community in Catholic Religious Life* (New York: Paulist, 2001).

had advised “that every convent have a baby in it to humanize the nuns,” and most Catholic Worker parents can testify to the humanizing effect that children and babies have on both the desperately poor and the militantly activist.⁴⁹ “A child’s presence enlightens the atmosphere,” said Suzette Ermler, a single woman at the New York Catholic Worker. “There were people—women in particular—who were really brought out of their shells by playing with Georgie [a child who had lived at Maryhouse briefly], helping to take care of Georgie a little bit.”⁵⁰ The presence of children also brings a sense of play to the many antiwar demonstrations sponsored by the Worker: even as protesters call attention to the grim threat of nuclear war, they may use brightly colored ribbons to weave a “web of life” or huge puppets to symbolize the abiding power of nature.

Even more importantly, the presence of families can break down the barriers between those who “serve” and those who are “served” within an intentional community movement. Despite the Catholic Worker’s egalitarian ideals, the lines between homeless “guests” and volunteer “Workers” can be sharp within Catholic Worker communities. Children blur the line, partly because they themselves fit into neither category and partly because they can make their parents vulnerable, in need of help from the “guests.” Kennedy, for example, came to the New York Catholic Worker as a sort of “fix-it” girl—someone who had a knack for getting struggling communities back on their feet. Just after the birth of her child, however, it was Joanne who was off her feet with mastitis. Though in some ways this left the community in the lurch, it also gave several guests the opportunity to exercise unrealized gifts for nurture and community building.⁵¹

These positive effects often reach beyond the walls or boundaries of a community, allowing it to build more solid alliances with neighbors and mainstream social institutions. “Children, you know, are great community builders,” Bickham explained to Troester. “If you have a child, you go walking around the neighborhood and talk to everybody.”⁵² Willa’s daughter Kate was born around the time that Willa and her husband Brendan Walsh founded Viva House Catholic Worker as a sanctuary not only for poor people but also for Vietnam War resisters. Kate’s presence allowed them to be perceived not just as radical peaceniks, but also as ordinary folks with a commitment to the neighborhood. She also

⁴⁹ Dorothy Day, “On Pilgrimage,” *Catholic Worker* 30, no. 1 (July–August 1963): 2, reprinted in her *On Pilgrimage: The Sixties* (New York: Curtis, 1972), 149.

⁵⁰ Interview with Suzette Ermler, May 23, 2000.

⁵¹ Interview with Joanne Kennedy, May 23, 2000.

⁵² Cited in Troester, *Voices*, 49.

provided the initial point of contact with the next door neighbors, a large family who frequently took in relatives or friends, practicing the traditional sort of hospitality that the Catholic Worker hoped to revive. A generation later, Kate experienced for herself the way parenting can break down unnecessary barriers between a radical movement and mainstream society. "When you have a baby, it is the best drawing card you could ever get for getting to know people. . . . You can go out in the backyard and everyone wants to talk to you. It's a good unifying point because most people have kids, so they can relate to your experience."⁵³

At the Anathoth Community Farm in Wisconsin, cofounder Mike Miles is keenly aware of the way his family life has helped him build bridges to the surrounding rural community. Mike is extremely involved in the life of the local, 200-student high school, both as a substitute teacher and track coach. When his son Phil was in second grade, Mike and Barb Kass invited Phil's class to Anathoth, and every second grade class since then has made a similar field trip. Looking at the community's tire swing, Mike commented that "by the time Phil is a senior I'll have pushed every kid in the school in that swing." Over the years, Mike has seen the neighbors grow increasingly open to Anathoth's radical ideas. During the Kosovo War, for example, other parents sought out his perspective as a valuable counterweight to mainstream media coverage.⁵⁴

Mike and Barb also credit their experience as parents with bringing a greater sense of honesty to their community-based activism. During the months leading up to the Gulf War, Mike participated in a major protest at one of the Army bases that was to be used for troop deployment, and as a result he spent Christmas in jail. When the war started just weeks after his release, the children were devastated. "We thought you were going to stop the war," they complained. Adults, Barb reflected in our interview, can "rationalize" such a situation by saying that "effectiveness isn't really what we're about," but the "very basic questions" posed by the children forced them to dig deeper into their reasons for doing resistance work.⁵⁵

For Barb and Mike, and for many families, this digging deeper led to greater commitment. Since the Catholic Worker has traditionally suffered from a revolving door membership, such commitment is an important gift. "Parents," wrote Catholic Worker Dana Rodenbaugh, "are in it for the long run. This can be a strong challenge to those who push for major impact/action but move on after the novelty or

⁵³ Interview with Willa Bickham and Brendan Walsh, May 25, 2000; interview with Kate Walsh-Little, May 25, 2000.

⁵⁴ Interview with Mike Miles and Barb Kass, August 22, 2000.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

romance of community life is gone and the hard realities have moved in.”⁵⁶ “The Catholic Worker,” elaborated Terrell, “is not supposed to be like the Peace Corps [or] Jesuit Volunteers . . . something for somebody getting out of college and wanting to do something for the poor for the next couple of years. . . . All of that’s very good . . . but ultimately it’s supposed to be a revolution. It should be something that people will come to for their life and will want to raise their kids in.”⁵⁷

The flip side of this gift is that families challenge communities to adjust their lifestyle to what Claire called the distinct “tempo” of family life. As I shall describe in more detail shortly, families that stay long-term at the Worker may make significant changes, limiting the scope of a community’s hospitality work and chastening hopes of bringing about a revolution within a few years. But even that can be a gift, as Day observed in describing the growth of one family at Maryfarm in Easton, Pennsylvania. “Before long Jim Montague got married. He and his wife had one baby and then another. By the time there were three of them we were able to compare our own progress with the growth of a family, and we began to get it through our heads that our ideals would only be achieved slowly—even more slowly than the development of a child. We had wanted to see them burst forth full-fledged, on their feet, as did the young calves and goats we delighted in watching.”⁵⁸ The rhythms of family life are also the rhythms of genuine social change.

CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC WORKER FAMILIES

All of these mutual benefits can come at a significant price. Though most Catholic Worker parents sing the praises of combining family and community life, they are also eloquent about the challenges they have faced. Many Catholic Worker houses of hospitality, for example, are located in urban neighborhoods that can be dangerous and frightening. Terrell, who began his family at the Davenport Catholic Worker, recalled “the two times we brought a kid home from the hospital . . . somebody broke a window. Some drunk, crazy, violent nastiness happened that ended up with broken glass all over the place.”⁵⁹ Claire Schaeffer-Duffy of Worcester similarly recounted two instances when she was nearly hit by an angry guest during a pregnancy. “I used to dread the summers,” she added, “because all the kids would be out

⁵⁶ Dana Rodenbaugh, in response to my questionnaire, August 2, 2000.

⁵⁷ Brian Terrell, interview by Chris Gamm, August 19, 2000.

⁵⁸ Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 54.

⁵⁹ Brian Terrell, interview by Chris Gamm, August 19, 2000.

and playing. And this wasn't a setting where I could just let the kids open the back door, run out and play. . . . The [neighborhood] kids . . . just seemed so wound up and quick to become hostile." Claire's solution was to "hover over them," joining in the basketball games to provide a model of someone "who was being relaxed and playing by the rules and not feeling threatened by a point or two in a game." This kept her own children from being targets, as well as making "a small offering for these children whose lives . . . were so bereft of attention and affection," but it never entirely freed her from worries.⁶⁰ For other Catholic Worker parents, such experiences bring back hard memories. "I grew up a survivor, and I don't want my kids to be just survivors," Kathy Shuh-Ries told Troester. "One summer we had four turtles killed in front of [our children]. They were tired of having their bikes pulled out from under them. Children breaking their toys." When she saw her children begin to display angry and even racist behaviors, she knew it was time to move to a new neighborhood.⁶¹

Faced with the real dangers of urban life and an activist awareness of global war and poverty, Catholic Worker parents often worry that their children will grow up too quickly. "The children are exposed to a lot of disturbing information," Claire Schaeffer-Duffy explained. When one of her sons was just three years old, he insisted that she keep the radio on so that he could hear a report on the war in Bosnia. "Of course it was relevant to him because his father was there" on a solidarity trip. "You get beleaguered looking . . . at the cruelty," Claire said, and in response she is "adamant about them taking music classes and pursuing the arts and being creative because it's kind of a statement of life."⁶²

Another important struggle has to do with schooling. Catholic Workers are committed to living in solidarity with the poor, but they are rarely willing to subject their own children to the dysfunctional urban schools that are the fate of many poor Americans. Fortunately, their own educational backgrounds and knowledge of "the system" allow them to access the best that the public school system has to offer. The Schaeffer-Duffy children have attended racially and economically diverse magnet school programs, supplemented with private music lessons that Claire paid for by cleaning houses and, later, writing articles for Catholic publications.⁶³ Chris and Jackie Allen-Doucot turned down an offer of free Catholic school tuition for their children, then fought

⁶⁰ Interview with Claire Schaeffer-Duffy, January 5, 2002.

⁶¹ Kathy Shuh-Ries, cited in Troester, *Voices*, 301.

⁶² Interview with Claire Schaeffer-Duffy, January 5, 2002.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

hard to get them into a Montessori school sponsored by the Hartford public school system.⁶⁴ Some other Catholic Worker parents do choose parish schools, where they often qualify for very generous financial aid.

Catholic Worker parents may struggle even more with challenges that are rooted in the internal dynamics of community life. Because communities abolish the clear distinction between “work” and “home,” many parents struggle with divided loyalties. The most challenging thing about parenting in the Catholic Worker, said Larry Purcell, is “being stretched between the commitments of a Catholic Worker . . . and the responsibilities and commitments to your family. You never feel that anything is done well or enough.”⁶⁵ Chris Allen-Doucot, who greatly values the privilege of being home with his family all day, also reported that “my children are sometimes not cognizant that we’re working. [They want] to know why we won’t spend more time with them when they’re here and we’re here.”⁶⁶

Most of the parents I spoke to recalled moments of tension with community members who were not parents. On the one hand, they valued these people as role models and occasional babysitters for their children. Yet they often discovered that singles had vastly different expectations about life in community—and far more energy to spend on community meetings and endless theological discussions. At the Anathoth Community Farm, Miles and Kass parented alongside three childless adults who are long-term community members as well as several interns or other short-term people. The very different rhythms of their lifestyles made it difficult to realize some of their original ideals of intentional community. While their children were in high school, for example, they withdrew almost completely from community meals, even as the others ate together around five times a week.⁶⁷

Catholic Worker Betsy Keenan said that for her the hardest thing about parenting in community was “when among the adults there’s different expectations for behavior. Different things are tolerated, so that things that you might not allow other people let go by, or things that you think are not a problem and other people find them to be a problem.”⁶⁸ Kennedy elaborated on this point by suggesting that the very idealism of Catholic Worker communities can exacerbate tensions among parents. “It’s interesting that we’re not easy on each other. . . . Part of what brings people to the Catholic Worker is their critical na-

⁶⁴ Interview with Chris Allen-Doucot, January 4, 2002.

⁶⁵ Larry Purcell, interview with Chris Gamm, July 14, 2000.

⁶⁶ Interview with Chris Allen-Doucot, January 4, 2002.

⁶⁷ Interview with Mike Miles and Barb Kass, August 22, 2000.

⁶⁸ Betsy Keenan, interview by Chris Gamm, August 19, 2000.

ture. You have to be critical of the society in order to have ended up here. . . . And we can be critical to each other. [Some people will say that] those kids are crazy, they never spank their kids and those kids run slipshod over everything. [And others] will say I wouldn't ever beat my child."⁶⁹

One of the great benefits of the new consciousness among Catholic Worker families is that there is now an ongoing conversation about theoretical and practical responses to these challenges. Several Catholic Worker parents have, with considerable theological sophistication, proposed ways of rethinking Catholic Worker values to make room for families without compromising the radical challenge of the gospel. Holben, for example, has suggested that Catholic parents can think of their own children as among the "poor" whom the gospel calls them to serve. Building on the Catholic Worker teaching that every Christian is called to serve Christ in the guise of the stranger, Holben argued that "children are uniquely, personally independent representatives of the poor every Catholic Worker (indeed, every Christian) is called to serve. Just as with all God's poor, our children are Christ present to us in their need." Since "for Catholic Worker parents their own children are the poor closest to hand . . . certain choices made for the needs of their children's safety or health or the fulfillment of their potential . . . do not represent an abandonment of commitment to radical self-emptying love for the poor, but are rather a particularization of that love in the context of their own families." Holben's intent certainly was not to suggest that care for one's own children should preclude care for other sorts of poor people but, rather, to suggest that family nurture provides the starting point for a broadening circle of concern.⁷⁰

Lynn and Bob Lassalle-Klein have argued for a slightly different approach, drawing on Latin American liberation theology to suggest that the heart of the Worker is not so much being poor as being in solidarity with the poor. Solidarity, from their perspective, means placing more emphasis on being "for" and "with" the poor, for the long term, than on being "like" the poor—a commitment that most people can sustain for only very brief periods of time. "If the central 'plank' of the Catholic Worker movement is voluntary poverty," Lynn Lassalle-Klein explained in her master's thesis on families in the Worker, "family involvement will be problematic. . . . But if instead the 'plank' is solidarity with the poor, then families can have a central place in the

⁶⁹ Interview with Joanne Kennedy, May 23, 2000.

⁷⁰ Holben, "Family Life and the Catholic Worker," 13–14.

movement.”⁷¹ A few years later her husband explained to Troester that “in terms of living *como el pobre* or ‘like the poor,’ we’re basically making practical accommodations because, for us, the important thing is to stay. For instance, we’re not under the illusion that we have to condemn our kids to a substandard education in the Oakland public schools (which are in receivership) because we have to be *like* the poor. That’s something we decided to be practical about.”⁷²

Larry Purcell, for his part, has suggested that Day’s own life can be seen as an example of this emphasis on sustainability. Writing in a newsletter that circulated among Catholic Worker houses in the 1990s, Purcell complained about Day’s lack of verbal support for Catholic Worker families but then mused that “maybe her life says something else. In her books and biographies about her it’s clear to me that she took care of herself. . . . She traveled also and lectured because these were things she loved to do and ways to earn money which she desperately needed in order to support her child. . . . So while Dorothy says that Catholic Worker Houses are primarily for the poor, she made sure that her SPIRIT, her heart and her child were cared for as best she could.” The larger lesson, Purcell concluded, is that Catholic Worker houses are not only “for” the poor. They are places where all people can “make sense out of everyday life and the Gospels,” and where families in particular can “chisel out another way of life (set of values) in this insane world where families are on the endangered species list.”⁷³

What all of these theological arguments imply, at the practical level, is that Catholic Worker communities must “make room,” both literally and metaphorically, for families. When I asked Bickham and Walsh about the experience of raising a daughter at the Catholic Worker, they responded by drawing a diagram to show how their living space had evolved over the years. In 1985, they purchased the adjoining row house from the city for back taxes. This allowed them to devote the first floor of both houses to their soup kitchen ministry, while creating a private family apartment upstairs. The return of Kate and her husband Dave to Viva House, just before my visit, led to a new series of physical changes, as Viva House made room for Kate’s after-school program, Dave’s legal aid clinic, and private apartments for each couple. “It’s very difficult to raise a family in the Catholic Worker,” Brendan

⁷¹ Marilyn L. Klein, “Families in the Catholic Worker Movement” (MA thesis, Graduate Theological Union, 1991), Day/CW, series W-7.1, box 4, folder 2.

⁷² Bob Lassalle-Klein, cited in Troester, *Voices*, 296.

⁷³ Larry Purcell, *Catholic Worker Grapevine*, July 11, 1993. The *Catholic Worker Grapevine* was an informal, short-lived newsletter that often included untitled reflections by Catholic Workers.

stressed, “unless you make real space for raising the family within the family.”⁷⁴ Similarly, at Saints Francis and Thérèse Catholic Worker, Claire Schaeffer-Duffy explained that “I would periodically try to figure out how to rearrange the house to give a little more space to the family, or maybe even to our hospitality space.” Claire also highlighted the way in which “making room” can look very different at different stages of a community’s life. For many years, their primary strategy was to reserve the first floor of their building as family space. But at the time of my visit, the family had just decided to “make room” for their oldest, teenage son by moving his bedroom upstairs to a floor occupied by homeless guests.⁷⁵

A similar flexibility informs Catholic Worker families’ approach to money. One of Day’s greatest worries about families in the Worker was that donations intended to benefit the poor would be diverted to meeting family needs. (This concern was all the greater in the early years of the movement, when many of the families attracted to Catholic Worker ideals had six, ten, or even more children.) Out of respect for this principle, the vast majority of Catholic Worker parents work part or even full-time jobs to pay for health insurance, family vacations, or Catholic school tuition.⁷⁶ Many are quite emphatic in reiterating Day’s underlying principle, even if they sometimes worry that outside employment runs counter to Catholic Worker tradition.⁷⁷ “We’ve made a policy,” explained Kay Peters of Seattle’s Family Kitchen. “Our house is not supported by donations. We each work part-time to support ourselves and our families and our house, and then all the money that’s donated to the Catholic Worker goes to the kitchen. It either buys food or pays for rents and utilities. So people can be sure that when they donate, it’s going to direct aid.”⁷⁸ Lynn Lassalle-Klein’s survey of Catholic Worker families suggests that such practices are in fact the prevailing approach in the movement today: of eight Worker families, she

⁷⁴ Interview with Brendan Walsh and Willa Bickham, May 25, 2000.

⁷⁵ Interview with Claire Schaeffer-Duffy, January 5, 2002.

⁷⁶ This seems to have been true even in the early days of the movement. A 1942 report on the Catholic Worker farm in Easton, Pennsylvania, indicated that two of the three fathers living there were working outside jobs, while the third had taken a short-term job in order to pay a hospital bill (Hazen Ordway, “Study of the Farming Commune at Easton, Pa.,” *Catholic Worker* 9, no. 5 [March 1942]: 7).

⁷⁷ Since the Catholic Worker oral tradition includes both Day’s criticisms of families living on donations and of Workers holding outside employment, Worker families who take this tradition too seriously face a catch-22 situation. But many would agree with Larry Purcell’s observation that “when in doubt” Catholic Workers can always “invoke ‘Anarchy’” (i.e., the Catholic Worker ideology of decentralism and personal responsibility). See Larry Purcell to Dan McKanan, April 22, 2005.

⁷⁸ Kay Peters, interview by Rosalie Riegle Troester, May 14, 1987, Day/CW, series W-9, box 7.

found five in which one partner held a full-time job, and two more in which one partner worked part-time.⁷⁹ My own interviews revealed a similar pattern.

Catholic Worker parents also “make room” for their families by transforming the missions of their communities to accommodate changing family circumstances. When Larry Purcell got married, for example, he and his spouse chose hospitality to battered infants as the mission that would best fit with the beginning of their own family.⁸⁰ Angie Miller and Steve O’Neil, by contrast, found it too stressful to worry about other people’s children as well as their own, and so their Catholic Worker house switched its emphasis to homeless men.⁸¹ Still other families have chosen to move within the larger Catholic Worker network to “make room” for their families’ changing aspirations. Though there are many viable models for raising families at houses of hospitality, many parents have also been drawn to Catholic Worker farms as especially nurturing environments for children. After several years of raising children at San Francisco’s Saint Martin de Porres community, Chris and Joan Montesano established a Worker farm because “We did not want to raise children in the ‘urban jungle.’ . . . In truth, I was worn out from seeing so much suffering on such a scale and wanted to create a place where ‘it was easier for people to be good.’” As their children aged, their mission evolved to include respite for persons with AIDS, a ministry “we would [not] have taken on with small children, as the folks themselves are needy and this could be in competition with the neediness of young children.”⁸²

LETTING GO

Of course, creating a balance between family responsibilities and the Worker lifestyle is not always as easy as these examples may suggest. Many Worker parents do choose to move out of Worker houses, at least for part of their children’s development, and some withdraw from the movement altogether. Such decisions can be heart-wrenching, but they should not be viewed as defeats for either the family or the community. Indeed, one of the most profoundly transformative practices for families at the Worker is that of simply letting go of the rigid ideal that every family must live in community for every moment of its life.

⁷⁹ Klein, “Families in the Catholic Worker Movement,” 76.

⁸⁰ Larry Purcell, interview by Chris Gamm, July 14, 2000.

⁸¹ Interview with Angie Miller and Steve O’Neil, August 25, 2002.

⁸² Joan Montesano, “The Juggling Act: Balancing Ministry, Resistance and Healthy Parenting,” *Family Life in the Catholic Worker Movement* 1, no. 1 (May 2001): 32.

Dan and Chris Delany founded the Los Angeles Catholic Worker around the time of their son John's birth. After a few years, they began feeling the need for "a small apartment . . . because there's not enough room here in the house for us." Fortunately, their community had been growing steadily, so they felt able gradually to leave "the day-by-day direction" in the hands of others. Their move out of the community also allowed them to explore the new vocational possibility of working for prison reform. Their plan, they wrote to the *Catholic Worker*, was to create an inmates' union by "organizing from the ground up—with the families and friends of the prisoners inside and with other interested people." In keeping with Day's principle that donations for the poor should be used for the poor, they also decided to seek part-time employment to support both themselves and this new venture.⁸³

While the Delanys were able to reflect on their change of lifestyle gradually, other families move in response to a more immediate crisis. One family I interviewed, for example, moved out of a Catholic Worker house almost immediately after their nine-year-old daughter tried to run away from home in protest against "living with so many people." Though her mother caught up with her only three blocks away, the incident coincided with other events that highlighted the importance of strong family ties: one of the parents had a brother who was dying of AIDS, and they also knew several people who had grown up in community settings and were bitterly resentful of the neglect they had experienced as a result. The decision to make a change was thus obvious, but still very difficult because of the strong relationships they had with the other adults (all of them childless) in the community. Still, moving out of the Catholic Worker allowed them to begin doing foster care, which proved to be a "form of hospitality that really includes our kids." It also helped them deepen their appreciation of the "gray zones" of intentional community. "I think some folks in the Catholic Worker view life in a very black and white fashion," said the father. "You're either a Catholic Worker or you're not. You're living a simple lifestyle or you're not. . . . And we've probably always been a little bit more in the gray zone." Though he dreamed of moving closer to the Catholic Worker ideal of simplicity after his children were grown, he also recognized that it is in the gray zone that true personal transformation often takes place.⁸⁴

⁸³ Dan and Chris Delany, "Los Angeles Prisons," *Catholic Worker* 38, no. 8 (October–November 1972): 6.

⁸⁴ Anonymous interview with author. The "gray zone" also helped the daughter integrate

Occhiogrosso, who was so committed to blending Worker and family ideals that she organized a conference on the topic, similarly told of her experience of moving out of the Worker house she had founded. After she and her husband adopted boys who were three and four years old, she concluded that "it was one thing for me to accept the stresses of living in a neighborhood plagued with drug-related violence. To parent young children in this environment when I had options to do otherwise did not seem right." At the same time, she remained convinced that "it is beneficial for their spiritual development for them to be exposed to the reality of poverty and to the suffering others endure," so she made a point of bringing her children to the house on a regular basis. More broadly, she remained convinced that "parenting by no means compromised the essential challenges set in place by this radical gospel lifestyle I wished to embrace. Parenting forced upon me the task of experimenting fiercely with the transformative power of divine love in action."⁸⁵

Even the Walsh-Bickhams of Viva House, who were so creative about adapting their style of community life to their family's needs, moved their living space out of the house for a few years during their daughter Kate's early adolescence. In 1979, they reached a "fed-up, stagnant period," in part because of their failure to have a local Catholic high school building converted into a large hospitality house. They considered simply handing Viva House over to their friends at Jonah House, but, as Willa wrote to a Catholic Worker friend, "we don't want to go backwards, we don't want to cop-out, we don't want suburbia." Ultimately, they decided to convert Viva House into a shelter for women and children, but as this plan was fleshed out they realized there was little room for their family. So they moved about a five minutes' trip down the street. After five years, though, they realized that "living as a nuclear family was not what we wanted to do" and that Viva House needed a live-in community "in order to continue and increase the work of the house." When the adjoining row house became available, they jumped at the chance to establish a more private family apartment within the structure of Viva House.⁸⁶

Such decisions almost always respond to very particular circumstances, and the parents who make them are usually careful to avoid

her Catholic Worker experience into her personal story; years later, she would write positively about it in her college application essay.

⁸⁵ Occhiogrosso, "Reflections of a Catholic Worker Mom," 23.

⁸⁶ Willa Bickham to Peggy [Scherer?], July 24, 1979, Day/CW, series W-4, box 6, folder 9; Open Letter from Viva House, Feast of the Assumption 1979, Day/CW, series W-4, box 6, folder 9; and Brendan Walsh, "Community," *Enthusiasm*, Spring 1984, 6, Day/CW, series W-51, box 1, folder 19 (titled "Newsletters").

sweeping generalizations about the compatibility of family and community. The father whose daughter ran away from home, for example, added that “we’ve seen people who’ve been raised in Catholic Worker communities who are just wonderful people and continue to do great work. I know it can be done. It didn’t work for us.”⁸⁷

Those who stay at the Worker, for their part, are quick to warn those who leave not to use their children as an excuse for their own choices. Terrell, for example, mentioned a column written by a former Catholic Worker who said that he and his spouse “didn’t want to subject their children to that kind of poverty and stress,” even though they had left the Worker eighteen months before they had children. “It was fine for them to be tired, fine for them to want to go off and do something else,” Brian elaborated. “But [it puts] a terrible burden . . . [on] these kids [to say], Mommy and Daddy left the life they loved for us.” For his own part, Brian is quick to correct people who think that his family moved from the Davenport house of hospitality to a farm for the sake of the children. “It was a tough thing when we moved here, taking our kids away, because they loved the community, there’s always somebody around, they loved the guests. The whole scene was really a good one for them.” But Brian was burned out from eleven years of intense hospitality, and he “wanted to give the rural aspect of the Catholic Worker a try.”⁸⁸

Brian’s criticism underscores the importance of seeing each new stage of family life as an opportunity as well as a challenge. There are times when the needs of children provide the primary, if not the only, reason for moving out of a community. But such a move can be helpful to children only if, rather than blaming the children, parents take creative responsibility for bringing the values forged in community into a new arena. Such creative decisions, if undertaken properly, can actually have the double effect of opening up new possibilities for the community that is left behind as well as for the family that leaves. When Katrina and Jim Plato realized that “our family’s vision no longer fits with the evolving vision” at Bethlehem Catholic Worker farm, Katrina made a point of extending her blessing to those Workers who would come after her. “A couple months ago,” she wrote in the community newsletter, “a strong wind blew through the farm pulling up the Bethlehem Farm sign at the end of the driveway. A fitting symbol of movement and transformation. . . . Jim and I move to a new community and new hospitality, making room for evolving community and a fresh

⁸⁷ Anonymous interview with author.

⁸⁸ Brian Terrell, interview by Chris Gamm, August 19, 2000.

vision here. . . . This is a place of immeasurable healing. A new sign will be put up by the new community made of different wood and fresh paint."⁸⁹

In a sense, the families that "leave" the Worker offer a gift as profound as those who find creative ways to "stay." These families can remind all Workers of Day's conviction that the Catholic Worker movement was more than a collection of particular houses of hospitality, communal farms, and newspapers. Above all, it is an expression of the belief that the radical demands of the gospel apply to all Christians and must be worked out in the full range of circumstances in which Christians find themselves. "Here in Portland," reflected Margo Mischler-Philbin in the newsletter on Catholic Worker families, "we are aware of a large group of like-minded families striving to live the values of simplicity, service, hospitality, justice and spirituality, albeit without the title Catholic Worker. There are many other such groups in other cities, I imagine. Are Peter and Dorothy's original vision of each family having a Christ room in their home, serving their families and the wider community at one and the same time, beginning to come to pass in some small way?"⁹⁰ If so, then it will soon be possible to answer a resounding "yes!" to the question of whether families can answer the call of the gospel.

⁸⁹ Katrina Plato, "Changing of the Bethlehem Farm Sign," *Bethlehem Peace Farm* 1, no. 1 (May 1998): 1-2, Day/CW, series W-4, box 17, folder 13.

⁹⁰ Margo Mischler-Philbin, "Reflections on 'and Family Life' Retreat," *Family Life in the Catholic Worker Movement* 1, no. 1 (May 2001): 31.

On the Track of the Fugitive Gods: Heidegger, Luther, Hölderlin

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Was ist Gott? Unbekannt, dennoch / Voll Eigenschaften ist das
Angesicht / Des Himmels von ihm. (FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN,
"Was Ist Gott?")¹

Heidegger's engagement with the poetic opus of Friedrich Hölderlin began in his student years and continued for the remainder of his life.²

¹ Friedrich Hölderlin, "Was Ist Gott?" in *Friedrich Hölderlin: Selected Poems and Fragments*, trans. Michael Hamburger (London: Penguin, 1998), 271.

² In citing works by Heidegger, I have followed recent conventions by using abbreviations for volumes of the *Gesamtausgabe* and, where applicable, abbreviations of English translations (these are parenthetical in the text and followed by page numbers): Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 4, *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1996)/Keith Holler, trans., *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry* (Amherst, NY: Humanity, 2000), hereafter G4; vol. 5, *Holzwege* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2003)/Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes, ed. and trans., *Off the Beaten Track* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), hereafter G5; vol. 9, *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976)/William McNeill, ed., *Pathmarks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), hereafter G9; vol. 15, *Seminare* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1996), hereafter G15; vol. 24, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1975)/Albert Hofstadter, trans., *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), hereafter G24; vol. 26, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1978)/Michael Heim, trans., *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), hereafter G26; vol. 39, *Hölderlins Hymnen "Germanien" und "Der Rhein"* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1999), hereafter G39; vols. 56/57, *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1987)/Ted Sadler, trans., *Towards the Definition of Philosophy* (London: Athlone, 2000), hereafter G56/57; vol. 60, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1995)/Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, trans., *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), hereafter G60; vol. 61, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1985)/Richard Rojcewicz, trans., *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into Phenomenological Research* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), hereafter G61; vol. 63, *Ontologie (Hermeneutikk der Faktizität)* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1983)/John Van Buren, trans., *Ontology: Hermeneutics of Facticity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), hereafter G63; and Martin Heidegger and Elisabeth Blochmann, *Briefwechsel, 1918–1969*, ed. Joachim W. Störck (Marbach am Neckar: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 1989), hereafter HB; Martin Heidegger and Heinrich Rickert, *Briefe, 1913–1933*, ed. Alfred Dinkler (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2002); hereafter HR; John Van Buren, ed., *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to "Being and Time" and Beyond* (Albany: SUNY

At each of the decisive turning points in his philosophical career, Heidegger found inspiration in Hölderlin.³ More recently, commentators have raised questions about the role that his reading of Hölderlin played in Heidegger's political actions of the 1930s. It has been suggested that Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin is linked with a troubling nationalism, romantic militarism, and cult of the German "fatherland."⁴ On this reading, Heidegger's lectures and essays on Hölderlin from the 1930s and 1940s testify to his betrayal of his youthful work that had been animated by the more congenial spirits of early Christianity and Kierkegaard.

While I by no means wish to deny the troubling aspects of Heidegger's romantic politics, I also want to retrieve another aspect of Heidegger's engagement with Hölderlin that has received less attention. In particular, I hope to show in what follows that Heidegger's essays and lectures on Hölderlin can be read, in part, as attempts to work out a philosophical theology. This is grounded in the claim that philosophical theology is the "red thread" that runs through all of Heidegger's work, uniting his early lectures in Freiburg and Marburg with his later essays and lectures on Hölderlin during the 1930s and beyond. In order to substantiate this claim, I will first of all show how Heidegger developed a tentative philosophical theology during the early 1920s that was heavily influenced by his reading of Luther. The characteristic positions worked out during these early years reappear much later, in the 1940s and 1950s. Having thus outlined Heidegger's basic theological position, I will go on to examine three of his most important discussions of Hölderlin's work: (1) the lecture course for winter semester (WS) 1934–35, (2) the address on the centennial of Hölderlin's death in 1942, and (3) the postwar essay "Wozu Dichter?" (1946). I will show how, in these

Press, 2002), hereafter S; Martin Heidegger, *Zollikoner Seminare. Protokolle—Gespräche—Briefe*, ed. Medard Boss (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1987)/Franz Meyer and Richard Askey, trans., *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols, Conversations, Letters*, ed. Medard Boss (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001), hereafter ZS. Similar abbreviations are used in the case of Luther's works: *Luther's Works*, vol. 25, *Lectures on Romans: Scholia and Glosses* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1974), hereafter LW25; *Luther's Works*, vol. 29, *Lectures on Titus, Philemon, Hebrews* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), hereafter LW29; *Luther's Works*, vol. 31, *The Career of the Reformer I* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1957), hereafter LW31.

³ For an overview of Heidegger's relationship with Hölderlin's work, see Otto Pöggeler, "Heideggers Begegnung mit Hölderlin," *Man and World* 10 (1977): 13–61. Pöggeler notes that Heidegger was quite familiar with poets like Hölderlin and Trakl even during his student days, prior to World War I, and that, later in life, he testified to his interest in Hölderlin during the 1920s (15). The recent publication of Heidegger's lecture course for the War Emergency Semester of 1919 testifies to his early interest in Hölderlin's work (see G56/57 74/62).

⁴ See, e.g., John Van Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 389–90, 392–93.

texts, Heidegger continues to articulate his basic theological position in interpreting Hölderlin's poetry.

I. HEIDEGGER AS PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGIAN

Before proceeding to the explication of Heidegger's basic theological position, three points of clarification are in order. First, and most important, is the question of whether it is even legitimate to talk about Heidegger's "philosophical theology" in the first place. Legitimate questions have been raised with regard to giving such a reading of Heidegger.⁵ For example, Hans Jonas, a student of Heidegger's during the 1920s and 1930s, warned theologians that Heidegger's later thought was fundamentally incompatible with Christian theism. Jonas, however, overstates his case; after all, theologians have fruitfully appropriated Heidegger's work without thereby having to accept all of his views on particular topics. None can deny that Heidegger had a lifelong interest in religion and theology, nor can it be gainsaid that there is indeed a "religious dimension" to his philosophy.⁶ The question is, does Heidegger have something like a "philosophical theology"?

First of all, the meaning of the phrase "philosophical theology" needs clarification. There seems to be no obvious, ready-made definition to which all would agree. Some, for example, might hold that a philosophical theology makes no recourse to scriptural tradition. But this would seem to exclude many thinkers, including Leibniz and Kant, who make liberal use of the Bible. Thus, to avoid begging any questions, I will make use of a minimal conception of philosophical theology in what follows. On this conception, philosophical theology is the attempt to explicate the meaning of religious discourse, to lay bare its underlying conceptual structure, and, if need be, to revise it. To say that Heidegger is doing "philosophical theology" is just to say that he is doing something like this.

A further issue, however, concerns the use of the phrase "philosophical theology." Why not use one of the terms native to Heidegger's thought itself, like "phenomenology of religion," "hermeneutics," or

⁵ See, e.g., Hans Jonas, "Heidegger and Theology," *Review of Metaphysics* 18 (1964): 207–33; and Theodore Kisiel, "War der frühe Heidegger tatsächlich ein 'christlicher Theologe?'" in *Philosophie und Poesie: Otto Pöggeler zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1988), 59–75.

⁶ This term is borrowed from Hans-Georg Gadamer's classic study, "Die Religiöse Dimension," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 3, *Neuere Philosophie: Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 308–19. See also Bernhard Welte, "God in Heidegger's Thought," *Philosophy Today* 26, no. 1 (1982): 85–100.

“thinking”? First of all, the latter two designations are much too broad, in that they encompass Heidegger’s project as a whole. My focus here is on a particular, though central, aspect of this overall project. Furthermore, “phenomenology of religion” is also too broad. My interest here is in one part of the phenomenology of religion, that is, the concept of God. “Phenomenology of religion” embraces much more than this. Perhaps the most serious challenge to the reading of Heidegger that I am proposing here lies in his own well-documented critique of “ontotheology,” or with the traditional approach to theistic metaphysics in general. As I will show in what follows, Heidegger is at pains to suggest that one can do philosophical theology without falling into the trap of ontotheology.

Heidegger’s early interest in theology has been extensively documented and continues to be examined by commentators. This interest continues throughout Heidegger’s time at Marburg (1923–28). At the outset of his second Freiburg period, Heidegger could often be found in retreat at the Benedictine monastery at Beuron (HB 31–32, 40–41). One commentator feels quite comfortable in talking about Heidegger’s “theology” in the 1930s, particularly in the unpublished work *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (1936–38).⁷ His earliest postwar statement of his philosophical position, the “Letter on Humanism,” addresses the concept of God quite directly (G9 161/252–53, 169/258). In 1951, Heidegger told participants in a seminar in Switzerland that he was still very much “inclined” to write a “theology” (G15 436). Several years later, he entered into a relationship with a group of Protestant theologians. In 1961, he participated in a seminar at Freiburg with noted Lutheran theologian Gerhard Ebeling, who also asked for Heidegger’s assistance in editing a later manuscript by Luther (ZS, Meyer and Askey translation, 256). Clearly, then, Heidegger meets at least a minimal requirement for having a theological position.

The second and third points of clarification concern the nature of Heidegger’s philosophical theology. First, Heidegger’s is a philosophical theology through and through. By that I mean that his reflections about God and about religious life and history are not restricted by a prior commitment to the dogmatic system of any confession. Heidegger began distancing himself from any sort of “official” theology quite early on. Writing to Rickert on February 27, 1917, Heidegger tells his adviser that “I have never stood on the *narrow* Catholic standpoint, i.e., that I would

⁷ Günter Figal, “Forgetfulness of God: Concerning the Center of Heidegger’s *Contributions to Philosophy*,” in *Companion to Heidegger’s “Contributions to Philosophy,”* ed. Charles E. Scott (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 198–212.

or had to somehow orient the problems, the conceptions, and the solution to a traditional, extrascientific point of view. I will seek for, and teach, the truth according to a more free personal conviction" (HR 42). The import of these remarks for the present discussion is clear enough—Heidegger's philosophical investigations into the concept of God will be carried out as far as possible independently from prior commitment to a doctrinal system. This is not to say, of course, that Heidegger completely detaches himself from Christianity. It is only against the larger background of his attempts to come to grips with the theological and philosophical heritage of European culture that Heidegger's own efforts in philosophical theology can be located accurately.

Second, Heidegger's philosophical theology, like his thought on virtually every other subject, was always tentative, provisional, and elusive. Thus, it would be a mistake to expect Heidegger to give a fully worked-out philosophical theology after the fashion of Kant or Hegel. Loose notes attached to his WS 1921–22 lecture make it clear that Heidegger is not interested in fleshing out a full-blown "dogmatics" in any sense, but rather with tentatively and hesitantly "leading" his readers "into" (*ein-leiten*) the "basic experience" that is and remains the core of religion (G61 197/148).⁸ Further, it is no part of my account here that philosophical theology is Heidegger's exclusive concern. Instead, it is merely a part of his overall project, albeit one that comes into play at the very beginning of his career as a central motive and remains operative as a crucial concern throughout the remainder of his life.

To summarize these clarificatory points: (1) Heidegger's lifelong interest in theology and religious life certainly qualifies him as a "philosophical theologian"; (2) however, his work in this area does not respect traditional confessional boundaries; and (3) Heidegger never provides a fully worked-out system of philosophical theology, but rather a series of suggestive hints, intriguing historical analyses, and biting criticisms of traditional philosophical theology.

⁸ In his notes for a cancelled lecture course on medieval mysticism, Heidegger articulates his project thusly: "A part of the ontology of religion, major aim: phenomenology. Only a certain rigorously methodical domain. No high-flying philosophy of religion. We stand at the beginning, or, more exactly: we must go back to the genuine beginnings, and the world can calmly wait. As a *religious person* I need no trace of the philosophy of religion" (G60 309). A related point is that Heidegger's most detailed discussions of philosophical theology usually involve more negative or critical assertions than they do constructive theorizing. Heidegger's most well-known discussions of philosophical theology are devoted to attacking what he eventually called "ontotheology," that is, the tradition of philosophical monotheism inherited from the Greeks. For an excellent discussion of this aspect of Heidegger's thought, see various essays in Merold Westphal, *Overcoming Onto-Theology: Towards a Postmodern Christian Faith* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001).

II. HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY

Having established that Heidegger does indeed have something to say about philosophical theology, the goal of the present section is to set out his basic position in outline. The sheer volume of Heidegger's discussions of God and of religious ideas and history is such that I cannot hope to provide an exhaustive account here. As is the case with virtually all the important aspects of his work, Heidegger's theological reflections are closely intertwined with a host of complex philosophical and personal issues. Nevertheless, it is possible to outline the basic contours of a position that, while first articulated in the years immediately following World War I, endures more or less unchanged throughout the rest of Heidegger's life.

The contours of Heidegger's theology were decisively shaped by his powerful encounter with Luther in the early 1920s. Others have extensively explored the historical details of Heidegger's Luther research.⁹ I am more interested here in the conceptual, philosophical, and theological fruits of this research. But, in order to demonstrate the depth of Luther's influence on Heidegger's own philosophical theology, a brief discussion of Luther's thought is in order.

By all accounts, it was Luther's early "theology of the cross" that most decisively influenced Heidegger. It was the "young Luther" whom Heidegger explicitly acknowledged as a tutor in these matters (G63 5/4).¹⁰ The "theology of the cross" is Luther's designation for any theological position, such as his own, that repudiates the classic tradition of philosophical monotheism, which he called the "theology of glory."¹¹ Luther worries, first of all, that philosophical monotheism actually misses the real message of Christianity. As he puts it in the "Heidelberg Disputation" from 1518, "The theologian of glory does not recognize, along with the Apostle, the crucified and hidden God alone (1 Corinthians 2:2)" (LW31 227). More than that, however, Luther worries that

⁹ John Van Buren has given the most extensive documentation of this encounter between Heidegger and Luther. See "Martin Heidegger, Martin Luther," in *Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thought*, ed. Theodore Kisiel and John Van Buren (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 159–74, and *The Young Heidegger*, 146–90, 307–13.

¹⁰ While it has been suggested that the "theology of the cross" remains in force throughout Luther's career, it is nevertheless the case that the term itself (*"theologia crucis"*) is used only in works from about 1515 to 1518. For a recent analysis of Luther's early thought, see Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985). The classic study, which argues for the presence of the "theology of the cross" even in Luther's more mature thought, is Walther von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, trans. Herbert J. A. Bouman (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976).

¹¹ By "philosophical monotheism," I mean the tradition stemming from Xenophanes, Plato, and Aristotle, where the term "god" (*theos*) has its place within an attempt to explain the rational order of nature and of human society through theoretical reason.

the “theology of glory” reflects the same drive for human self-aggrandizement that surfaces in the more familiar phenomenon of the “righteousness of works.” More specifically, the “theology of glory” is the issue of a perverted desire to determine the nature of God independently of God’s own free self-disclosure in the “foolishness” of the cross.¹² In the end, the “theology of glory” puts itself above God, dictating who and what God is and what God can do. Luther writes, “But alas, even now very many people think in an unworthy way about God and claim in bold and impudent treatises that God is this way or that way. . . . They so raise their own opinion to the skies that they judge God with no more trouble or fear than a poor cobbler judges his leather” (LW25 167).

God’s free self-disclosure is locked into the straitjacket of “human metaphysical rules” (LW29 111). The partisans of the “theology of glory,” Luther tells us, “want to be like God, and they want their thoughts to be not beneath God but beside Him” (LW25 366).

The central concept that Luther uses to undermine the “theology of glory” is that of the “hidden God” (*deus absconditus*). By “hiddenness,” Luther clearly does not mean “nonexistence.” He tells us what he means quite clearly in the lectures on Romans: “[The work of God] is never hidden in any other way than under that which appears contrary to our conceptions and ideas” (LW25 366). The “hidden God” is contrasted with the “naked” God longed for by theologians of glory, that is, God as an object of immediate apprehension. For Luther, the “hidden God” reveals himself, paradoxically, in the suffering humanity of Christ.¹³

This paradoxical “revelation in hiddenness” does not call for self-satisfied certainty or for boasting in the powers of reason, but rather for self-sacrificing trust (*fiducia*). The “kingdom of Christ,” Luther tells us, is “a place of exile, or to be living but to be constantly dying, or to be in glory but to be in disgrace, or to dwell in wealth but to dwell in extreme poverty, as everyone who wants to share in this kingdom is compelled to experience in himself” (LW29 117).

This experience of “riches in poverty” is, of course, faith. Faith, Luther writes, is like a state of being suspended between “heaven and

¹² In his lectures on Romans in 1515–16, Luther asserts that the “natural knowledge” of God through theoretical reason serves only to increase human pride and self-satisfaction (LW25 10). In the “theology of glory,” God is “changed and adjusted” to fit human “desires and needs” (LW25 157).

¹³ In order to remove the primary cause of alienation between humanity and God, that is, human pride, God reveals himself in “his human nature, weakness, foolishness” (LW31 52). God must be seen in the “humility and shame of the cross” (LW31 52–53). The God “hidden” in the humanity of Christ is elsewhere called “the God who is not seen” (LW29 111).

earth,” of lacking any foothold (LW29 185). One who believes dwells in “the deepest darkness of God” (LW29 216). Luther tries to express faith thusly: “And this is the glory of faith, namely, not to know where you are going, what you are doing, what you are suffering, and, after taking everything captive—perception and understanding, strength and will—to follow the bare voice of God and to be led and driven rather than to drive” (LW29 238).

Faith in the “hidden God” requires that one bear the “cross” of being a finite, historical being, a being that is incapable of ever “having” God except by continuously seeking after him. Luther stresses that “the condition of this life is not that of having but of seeking God” (LW25 225).¹⁴

Alongside the faith that God is indeed at work in the dereliction of the cross goes hope. Another favorite passage of Luther’s was Rom. 8: 24, “Now hope that is seen is not hope.” Hope, according to Luther, “transfers [one] into the unknown, the hidden, and the dark shadows, so that [one] does not even know what [one] hopes for, and yet [one] knows what [one] does not hope for” (LW25 364). In faith and hope God is “hidden” or “absent,” in the sense of being inaccessible to immediate apprehension. At the same time, God is also mysteriously present in a way that solicits human trust and gratitude rather than pride and presumption.

During the early 1920s, Heidegger’s philosophical theology begins to take on a notably Lutheran cast. While Heidegger never simply signs on to Lutheran theology, his basic position clearly shows the influence of Luther. That this is the case can be seen in four points that capture Heidegger’s inchoate philosophical theology during this period, and, indeed, throughout the remainder of his career: First, the most obviously Lutheran element of Heidegger’s theology is his critique of ontotheology, that is, of the tradition of philosophical monotheism that Luther had called the “theology of glory.” Second, and closely related to this, is Heidegger’s willingness to embrace the label of “atheism” in order to avoid falling into the conceptual traps of philosophical monotheism. Third, Heidegger maintained that a critical perspective on ontotheology could be sustained and enriched by examining the phenomena of religious life. Finally, Heidegger also sought to articulate the presence of God in factual, historical life as a way of developing a conception of God freed from the assumptions of traditional ontotheology.

¹⁴ Compare Luther’s similar comment elsewhere: “For this reason the whole life of the new people, the faithful people, the spiritual people, is nothing else but prayer, seeking, and begging by the sighing of the heart . . . , never standing still, never possessing” (LW25 264).

All of these elements show up in numerous places in Heidegger's work. The first, and most obvious, place to look is in Heidegger's well-known WS 1920–21 lecture course on Pauline Christianity. Heidegger first of all picks up on Luther's critique of the way in which ontotheology actually distorts the message of Christianity, which he views as being rooted in the "proclamation" of Jesus as Christ (G60 116/82).¹⁵ Following Luther's emphasis on revelation, Heidegger maintains that being a Christian is, fundamentally, a gift, rather than an intellectual achievement. Heidegger denounces the attempt to "gain a hold [*Halt*]" in life through a personally willed act of "transcendence" (G60 122/86). Heidegger radicalizes Luther's thought, arguing that "the Christian does not find his 'hold' in God (cf. Jaspers). That is a blasphemy! God is never a 'hold!'" (G60 122/86).

In this same lecture course, Heidegger is interested in thematizing the actual relation to God that is articulated in Paul's earliest letter. The life of the early Christian community has been subjected to an "absolute reversal [*Umwendung*]," a "turning toward God and away from idols" (G60 95/66). That is, the relation between the believer and God has the character of a total way of life, as opposed to the strictly theoretical intentional stance of a classic philosophical theologian. "The absolute turn towards God is explicated within the enactment sense of life in two directions: *douleuein* and *anamnein*, living before God [*Wandeln vor Gott*] and waiting in endurance [*Erharren*]" (G60 95/66).

Despite the fact that no one ever has a "hold" on God, Heidegger is quick to point out that there is nonetheless a "living, effective connection with God." "God's presence has a basic relation to the way of life [*Lebenswandel*] (*peripatein*). The reception is itself a living before God" (G60 95/66). While not simply "available" to human beings like a tool or a piece of leather, God is nevertheless present in an elusive way within factual, historical life itself. Here again, Luther's work has a clear relevance. Luther's "theology of the cross" locates the definitive revelation of the nature of God within history, within the life of a particular individual, and, by extension, also in the ongoing life of faith. What was decisive for Heidegger was the elusive presence of God in the midst of a life of "anxious worry" rather than in the ahistorical conceptual space of philosophical monotheism. Heidegger explores this elusive presence particularly in connection with early Christian eschatology, where an attitude of wakeful expectation replaces that of

¹⁵ Elsewhere, Heidegger accents the disturbing, disquieting aspect of the "proclamation" of the "crucified God" (G60 136–37/96–97, 143–44/101–2).

self-satisfied contemplation (G60 97–100/66–70, 102–105/71–73, 112/79).

Many of the main elements of Heidegger's Luther-inspired philosophical theology reappear the following semester in his "Augustine and Neoplatonism" lecture course.¹⁶ The critique of ontotheology emerges here in connection with Augustine's use of the Neoplatonic concept of the "highest good." In denying this version of philosophical monotheism, Heidegger is by no means denying that human beings can actually have a relationship with God. To the contrary, it is in the name of an authentic relationship to God that he undertakes this critique, castigating philosophical monotheism as mere "doing business [*Geschäftigkeit*] with God" (G60 265/198).¹⁷

Materials that have been collected from Oskar Becker's transcript of this lecture course continue in much the same vein. Commenting on some of Augustine's sermons, Heidegger argues that the "objectivity" (*Gegenständlichkeit*) proper to God can be adequately grasped only by paying attention to the nature of God "as appropriated [*zueignet*] by the heart in its authentic life" (G60 289/219). By locating the encounter with God in the "heart" rather than in abstract theorizing, Heidegger is not advocating subjectivism. God is not "made" by human cognitive faculties. Rather, God is mysteriously present in the elusive depths of factual, historical life. "God as object in the sense of the *facies cordis* [face of the heart] exists [*wirkt*] in the authentic life of human beings" (G60 289/219).¹⁸

Three years later, in the summer of 1924, Heidegger had the occasion to deal with Luther in the classroom once more. Here again, he focuses in on Luther's polemic against the "theology of glory," which defines

¹⁶ This lecture course also contains a brief discussion of Luther's "Heidelberg Disputation" of 1518, one of the most important articulations of his "theology of the cross." See G60 281–82/212–13. Heidegger's gloss on Thesis 19 reads like a formulaic encapsulation of his own philosophical theology: "The presentation [*Vorgabe*] of the object of theology is not to be achieved by way of a metaphysical reflection on the world" (G60 282/213).

¹⁷ On Heidegger's reading, such an "axiologized abstraction" conceals the actual experience of God in "existentiell anxious worry" (G60 259/195). In his 1947 "Letter on Humanism," Heidegger once again expresses his worries about conceptualizing God in the categories of value theory. In this case, he is more immediately concerned with neo-Kantianism than with Neoplatonism. He argues that "precisely through the characterization of something as 'a value' what is so valued is robbed of worth. . . . Every valuing, even where it values positively, is a subjectivizing" (G9 349/265). Thus, "When one proclaims 'God' the altogether 'highest value,' this is a degradation of God's essence" (G9 349/265).

¹⁸ This point is made more explicitly a bit later on in Heidegger's discussion: "Every cosmic-metaphysical reification [*Verdinglichung*] of the concept of God, even as an irrational concept, must be avoided. One must appropriate the *facies cordis* (inwardness) by oneself. God will be present in the inner man when we have understood what breadth, length, height, and depth (*latitude, longitude, altitude, profundum*) mean, and thus understand the meaning of the infinity of God for the thought of the heart" (G60 290).

the being of God in advance of his own free self-disclosure, by means of borrowed categories like "first cause" or "unmoved mover" (S 107). Heidegger accurately summarizes the thrust of Luther's position: "The Scholastic takes cognizance of Christ only subsequently, after having defined the being of God and the world. This Greek point of view of the Scholastic makes man proud; he must first go to the cross before he can say *id quod res est* [what the matter actually is]" (S 107).

Heidegger seems to agree with Luther that it is only in a contingent, finite, historical event of self-disclosure that one can catch a glimpse of the nature of God. Throughout the 1920s, Heidegger consistently argues that the categories of philosophical monotheism are simply not up to the task of making sense of this fundamental reality of Christian life and thought.¹⁹ Heidegger was, as I have shown in the preceding discussion, interested not only in the historical facticity of the cross as the revelation of God but also in the mysterious presence of God in the "cruciform" life of individual believers and of the primitive church. The heart of Heidegger's philosophical theology during this period is the Lutheran concept of the "hidden God," the God not available for the purposes of theoretical reason but nonetheless palpably present in "factual life-experience." That such a God has eluded "metaphysics" should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with Heidegger's overall conviction that traditional philosophy has failed to adequately thematize or conceptualize human factual life itself.²⁰

Another significant element of Heidegger's philosophical theology is also explicable in light of the influence of Luther on his thinking during the early 1920s. During WS 1921–22, while he was engaged in intensive study of Luther's works, Heidegger makes reference to the "atheism" of philosophy.²¹ Rather than committing philosophers to some form of positive atheism, Heidegger is instead drawing the logical conclusions from his reading of Luther.²² Philosophy must, according

¹⁹ In his programmatic essay, "Phenomenology and Theology," Heidegger argues that the revelation of the "crucified God" constitutes the ultimate ground for genuine "Christianity," and so for any theology that can rightly claim to be "Christian" (G9 52–54/44–45). This is, of course, a manifestly Lutheran position.

²⁰ Heidegger's critique of the limitations of the "theoretical attitude" begins in the War Emergency Semester of 1919. See G56/57 73–74/61, 85/71–72, 88/74, 91/76.

²¹ For a cogent analysis of this notion of the "atheism" of philosophy, see Istvan M. Feher, "Heidegger's Understanding of the 'Atheism' of Philosophy: Philosophy, Theology, and Religion in His Early Lectures up to *Being and Time*," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 69 (1995): 189–228.

²² The term "positive atheism," that is, the direct denial of the existence of God, is borrowed from Anthony Flew's classic essay, "The Presumption of Atheism," in *Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology*, ed. R. Douglas Geivett and Brendan Sweetman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 19–32.

to Heidegger, renounce any and all attempts "to have and to determine God" (G61 197/148). The difficult bit, the "art" of it, is both to "do philosophy" and to "be genuinely religious" (G61 197/148). In Heidegger's view, being "genuinely religious" has little to do with prattle about God and has nothing at all to do with successfully undertaking the project of ontotheology. Thus, philosophy is best characterized as being "away from" or "far from" (*weg*) God. This distance is more of the respectful variety, which, of course, can often be mistaken for standoffishness. Lest confusion befall his listeners, Heidegger makes it clear that in "carrying out" this distance, philosophy always has its own "difficult 'near to' or 'next to' [*bei*]" God (G61 197/148). Heidegger reiterates these ideas half a decade later, in his summer semester (SS) 1928 lecture course. He is quite willing to endure the charge of being "godless" in order to avoid "enormously phony religiosity," which is presumably the opposite of being "genuinely religious" (see above; G26 211/165, n. 9). In his usual way, Heidegger goes on to make an even more suggestive comment, without, however, developing the suggestion: "But might not the presumably ontic faith in God be at bottom godlessness? And might the genuine metaphysician be more religious than the usual faithful, than the members of a 'church' or even than the 'theologians' of every confession?" (G26 211/165, n. 9).

Heidegger here radicalizes the spirit (if not the letter) of Luther's theological revolution. For Luther, bad theology is, in a certain sense, worse than no theology at all. Bad theology blocks the appropriation of the saving power of the Gospel by veiling it under borrowed concepts. For Heidegger, too, upholding a particular dogmatic system is not necessarily the same thing as godliness. In fact, Heidegger wants to call into question the "Christianness" (*Christlichkeit*) of both much of the theological tradition and of modern liberal Protestantism. Like Luther, Heidegger is convinced that much of theology is complicit in an attempt to subvert the heart of Christianity and its startling message of the "crucified God."

These, then, are the contours of Heidegger's philosophical theology as it develops during the 1920s. First, following Luther, Heidegger rejects the tradition of philosophical monotheism *tout court*. At the same time, he attempts to avoid tossing out the real core of Christian faith and life and stops well short of positive atheism. He undertakes several halting and abortive attempts at a phenomenology of religious life as a means for developing a counterweight to ontotheology. In connection with this phenomenological move, Heidegger also expresses his interest in thematizing the elusive presence of God in the "heart," in "anxious worry," rather than in the cool room of theoretical reason.

Finally, Heidegger is willing to be dismissed as an atheist and an apostate in order to avoid transgressing the boundaries set by his own critique of the tradition.

III. HÖLDERLIN: ON THE TRACK OF THE FUGITIVE GODS

Beginning in the mid-1930s, Heidegger began to work out some of these hints of a philosophical theology in the midst of his larger conversation with Hölderlin. Heidegger's interest in Hölderlin, and in other German-language poets, had started much earlier, during his days as a university student.²³ Following World War I, Heidegger enlisted the poets as allies in his attempt to grasp the pretheoretical immediacy of "factual life-experience" and to break the hegemony of the "theoretical attitude" that had characterized European philosophy since its inception in ancient Greece.²⁴

As several commentators have noted, Heidegger was also interested in the theological potential of poets like Hölderlin and Rilke. Pöggeler, for example, makes constant reference to Heidegger's ambiguous stance vis-à-vis theology in his own exposition of the dialogue between Heidegger and Hölderlin.²⁵ Figal has rightly characterized Hölderlin as Heidegger's "poet of the fled gods."²⁶ Heidegger himself tries to make this connection as explicit as possible at a number of points. In his 1970 preface to the programmatic essay "Phenomenology and Theology," Heidegger groups Nietzsche, Hölderlin, and Franz Overbeck together around the whole problematic of theology, of the "Christianity of Christianity and its theology" (G9 45–46/39). In the appendix to this essay, a letter written in 1964 to a group of theologians at Drew University, Heidegger suggests that poetry is a potentially powerful resource for the theological project of articulating Christian faith without importing foreign categories (G9 78/61). Referring to the 1946 essay "Wozu Dichter?" Heidegger suggests that poetry is capable of expressing the elusive, nonobjective, nonempirical presence of God in faith. In this section, I want to follow up on Heidegger's hints and suggestions about the theological aspect of his dialogue with poets, focusing particularly on Hölderlin. There are two reasons for this narrowing of scope, one having to do with Heidegger and the other with Hölderlin.

²³ See Pöggeler, "Heideggers Begegnung mit Hölderlin," 15.

²⁴ He quotes from Hölderlin's free translation of Sophocles' *Antigone* as an illustration of the pretheoretical "environmental experience" of meaning (G56/57 74/62). A number of years later, following the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger refers to Rilke's *Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* to much the same effect (G24 244/171–72).

²⁵ Pöggeler, "Heideggers Begegnung mit Hölderlin, 20–21, 24, 26, 38–39.

²⁶ See Figal, "Forgetfulness of God," 202.

First, as is quite obvious, Hölderlin was the poet who most often engaged Heidegger's reflections. In numerous essays and lecture courses Heidegger explicitly deals with aspects of Hölderlin's work.

Second, Hölderlin's poetry has an obvious religious pathos to it, a pathos similar in many ways to that which animates Heidegger's own work. While Hölderlin clearly was willing to transgress the boundaries of orthodoxy in his poetry, he maintained a profound reverence for the Christian tradition. This is most evident in his later hymns. For example, in "Der Einzige," the poet enacts a passionate search for Christ: "Ihr alten Götter und all / Ihr tapfern Söhne der Götter / Noch Einen such ich, den / Ich liebe unter euch / Wo ihr den letzten eures Geschlechts / Des Haußes Kleinod mir / dem fremden Gaste verberget."²⁷ A similar sentiment is evoked in the fragmentary hymn "An die Madonna." In "Patmos," Hölderlin evokes the visionary experience of St. John. Thus, despite the fact that he was willing to sit loose with respect to orthodoxy, Hölderlin nevertheless expresses a profoundly religious sensibility. Heidegger, no doubt, saw his own mixture of passion and dis-ease with religion reflected in the works of his predecessor.

The sheer volume of the fruits of Heidegger's lifelong interpretive encounter with Hölderlin prevents me from attempting an examination of all of the many lecture courses, essays, and working drafts germane to the subject. Thus, I will focus on three of the most important of Heidegger's writings on Hölderlin: (1) the WS 1934–35 lecture course on Hölderlin's hymn "Germanien," (2) the centennial essay on the elegy "Heimkunft," delivered in 1943, and (3) the postwar essay "Wozu Dichter?" (1946).

The theological problematic appears at the outset of Heidegger's reading of "Germanien," focused on the very first lines of the poem: "Nicht sie, die Seeligen, die erschienen sind, / Die Götterbilder in dem alten Lande, / Sie darf ich ja nicht rufen mehr."²⁸ Heidegger zeroes in on the first word of the poem, "Nicht" (not). Despite appearances to the contrary, Heidegger wants to suggest, this word does not signify a straightforward negation or "refusal" (*Absage*; G39 81). Instead, in the context of these lines, "Nicht" expresses the situation of "having to give up a claim to something." Thus, rather than denying the existence of "the blessed," the poet is trying to articulate their distance

²⁷ Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, 219–20. In translation: "You ancient gods and all / You valiant sons of the gods, / One other I look for whom / Within your ranks I love, / Where hidden from the alien guest, from me, / You keep the last of your kind, / The treasured gem of the house."

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 188. In translation: "Not them, the blessed, who once appeared, / Those images of gods in the ancient land, / I may indeed no longer invoke them" (translation modified).

from his present situation. According to Heidegger, the poet is “awaiting” (*erharren*) them as present, yet still distant. Heidegger’s choice of the word “*erharren*” is significant here. In his WS 1920–21 lecture course on Pauline Christianity, he had used precisely this rare term to characterize the expectant attitude of the primitive church, longing for the “day of the Lord” in the midst of the “night of the world.” The word that Hölderlin uses to characterize his attitude is “*Heiligtrauernde*” (holy mourning).

Heidegger’s exposition of the poem is now focused on the phenomenology of this “holy mourning” for the “gods who are fled” (*Entflohene Götter*). First, he argues that this attitude is “holy” because it is “unselfish” (*uneigennützig*; G39 84). The poet refuses to submit the absent gods to the demands of utility or productivity. Rather than simply denying the gods or acquisitively lusting for their presence, the poet is willing to endure their absence in longing expectation. In this respect, Heidegger argues that “holy mourning” is like love. He reads “love” after the fashion of Augustine, defining it as “wanting the beloved to stand firm in its essence, in its being thus and so” (G39 82). During SS 1921, the record indicates that Heidegger lingered over Augustine’s attempt to articulate authentic love, which he contrasts with the love of the “gourmand” (*Schlemmer*) for the “fieldfare,” which the gourmand loves and then uses up. Real love is a “will to the being of the beloved” (G60 292/220). “Genuine love of God,” moreover, “has the sense of wanting to make God accessible as one who exists in an absolute sense. This is the greatest difficulty of life” (G60 292/221).

Similarly, in Hölderlin’s hymn, the poet’s mournful “renunciation” (*Verzicht*) of the right to invoke the gods is an attempt to preserve their being, their divinity (G39 93). Heidegger summarizes: “Holy mourning has resolved upon a renunciation [*Verzicht*] of the old gods—but—what the mourning heart wants is something different—i.e., in sending the gods away, to preserve their divinity inviolate, and in a preserving renunciation to hold to the distant gods in the nearness of their divinity. . . . What is this besides—indeed, it is nothing besides—the only possible, decisive preparation for waiting upon [*Erharren*] the gods” (G39 95).

Thus, the poet’s attitude is indeed one of “mourning,” for he is not renouncing the gods or denying their existence. Indeed, Heidegger is careful to explicitly contrast “holy mourning” with straightforward atheism (G39 95). The gods are, to be sure, not simply available. But, given what we know about Heidegger’s views on God, there is no reason to think that there ever was a time when the divine was simply there for us, like a piece of shoe leather. Instead, the poet’s attitude,

like the eschatological “anxious worry” of the primitive church and the trusting self-renunciation of Luther’s “theology of the cross” is the only one befitting the dignity of the object.

A bit later on in the lecture on “Germanien,” Heidegger takes an opportunity to develop one of the central themes of his philosophical theology, that is, the critique of ontotheology or philosophical monotheism. This time, he takes his cue from the ode “Dichterberuf.” The concluding lines of the poem appear, in much the same fashion as the opening lines of “Germanien,” to entail some kind of straightforward, positive atheism: “bis Gottes Fehl hilft.”²⁹ Talking about God being “missing” or “absent” seems one step away from talking, with Nietzsche, about God being “dead.”³⁰ Indeed, as Heidegger points out, this is just how the famous Hölderlin scholar von Hellingrath had read the word “*Fehl*” (missing). On this view, “*Fehl*” is a synonym for “*Abwesenheit*,” or “absence” in the sense of being nonexistent (G39 211). Heidegger wants to reject this straightforward reading, arguing that something much more subtle is going on than an expression of a poet’s despair at the loss of faith.

Heidegger’s argument turns, first of all, on contextualizing these lines within the ode as a whole. Two earlier lines are crucial in this regard. The first runs, “Noch ist auch gut zu weise zu seyn.”³¹ This line continues, “Ihn kennt / Der Dank.” The pronoun in this line refers back, on the most obvious reading, to the masculine noun at the beginning of the previous stanza, “Der Vater,” clearly a poetic appellation for God. In cautioning against being “all too wise” and suggesting that “thanks” rather than human cunning is the only viable attitude toward “Der Vater,” Hölderlin is chastening the titanic aspirations of humanity.

This is also the clear sense of the other lines that Heidegger refers to in his interpretation: “Zu lang ist alles Göttliche dienstbar schon / Und alle Himmelskräfte verschertzt, verbraucht / Die Gütigen, zur Lust, danklos, ein / Schlaues Geschlecht und zu kennen wähnt es.”³² Note the contrast that Hölderlin has drawn between those who are “danklos” and the “Dank” that alone is a suitable means of access to the divine Father. The whole thrust of the poem is captured in the

²⁹ Ibid., 83. In translation: “until God’s being missing helps.”

³⁰ For Heidegger’s own take on this famous trope of Nietzsche’s, see his 1943 essay “Nietzsche’s Word: ‘God is Dead’” (G5 157–99).

³¹ Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, 80. In translation: “Nor is it good to be all too wise.”

³² Ibid., 80. In translation: “Too long now things divine have been cheaply used / And all the powers of heaven, the kindly, spent / In trifling waste by cold and cunning / Men without thanks.”

lines “Nicht liebt er Wildes! Doch es zwinget / Nimmer die weite Gewalt den Himmel.”³³ Thus, on Heidegger’s view, the concluding phrase “Gottes Fehl” can be properly understood only within the context of the poet’s critique of a kind of knowledge “rooted in cunning and selfish calculation,” a knowledge that is “merely clever” and “only finds something if it has a use for it and if it promotes its own power” (G39 229). Hölderlin draws a proper contrast between titanic knowledge and the attitude of the poet, “alone” and without artifice before God, protected only by his “innocence” (G39 232).

According to Heidegger, “What is to be accented is not God’s *being missing* [*Fehl*], but *God’s being missing*” (G39 232). That is, the point of the poem is not to assert God’s nonexistence, but rather to defend his unavailability to human “cunning and selfish calculation.” The concept of God’s “being missing,” like Luther’s concept of the “hidden God” (*deus absconditus*), is meant to play a role in a critique of philosophical monotheism. As Heidegger himself shows in his 1924 lecture on Luther, the whole problem with the scholastic “theology of glory” is that it defines God in advance in terms of borrowed metaphysical categories. In so doing, it forecloses on the possibility of really being faced with the “scandal” of God’s free self-disclosure in a finite historical reality.

In Heidegger’s philosophical theology, then, God is “missing” or “hidden” insofar as he ultimately transcends the categories of the dominant tradition of Western metaphysics. At the same time, God is not totally inaccessible, but is present in a mysterious way in factual, historical reality. As I have already discussed, this element of Heidegger’s philosophical theology first comes on the scene in his working notes for the undelivered lecture course on medieval mysticism, and it also shows up in his WS 1920–21 lectures on Pauline Christianity and his SS 1921 lectures on Augustine. In the “Germanien” lectures from WS 1934–35, Heidegger finds a new vocabulary for articulating this idea. Here, he draws on the hymn “Wie wenn am Feiertage” and the ode “Rousseau.” In the former, Hölderlin describes mediated presence of the divine in the creative fires of poetic inspiration.³⁴ He uses the imagery of lightning, of the “heilgem Stral,” “himmlisches Feuer,” “Des Vaters Stral,” which the poet mediates to the people.³⁵

³³ Ibid., 80. In translation: “He loves no Titan! Never will our / Free-ranging power coerce his heaven.”

³⁴ See the discussion of this hymn in Richard Unger, *Hölderlin’s Major Poetry: The Dialectics of Unity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 107–22.

³⁵ Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, 174, 176. In translation: “holy ray,” “heavenly fire,” “the Father’s ray.”

In "Rousseau," Hölderlin praises the prophetic type who heralds the arrival of the "Kommenden Göttern."³⁶ In his lecture, Heidegger draws out the eighth stanza of the ode: "Vernommen hast du sie, verstanden die Sprache der Fremdlinge, / Gedeutet ihre Seele! Dem Sehnen war / Der Wink genug, und Winke sind / Von Alters her die Sprache der Götter."³⁷ Heidegger takes these materials from "Wie wenn am Feiertage" and "Rousseau" together as outlines of the poetic vocation, here conceived in explicitly religious terms. The poet is one who is sensitive to the elusive "language" of God, which consists in nothing more than "hints" (*Winke*) and lightning flashes of momentary insight (G39 32). Heidegger goes on to probe more deeply into the meaning of "*Winke*" as the "language" of God. On his reading, the key to understanding what Hölderlin is saying lies in seeing the link between the nominal "*Winke*" and the verb "*winken*," meaning "to gesture, beckon." The meaning of the latter is best grasped in the context of departure and arrival. In "taking leave" (*Abschied*) of someone, to "*winken*" is to "hold fast to nearness in the growing distance." As one moves away, a gesture of the hand marks one's presence, even as one is no longer directly available. So similarly, in "arriving" (*Ankunft*), to gesture in this way is to anticipate a "gladdening nearness" despite the fact that distance still remains between two parties (G39 32).

As Pöggeler points out, this whole discussion represents an attempt to conceive of the divine as in process, as a dynamic event of revelation in hiddenness.³⁸ To speak in this way about God's "hints" is to speak about his elusive presence within historical reality. Thus, despite the fact that God is "missing" from the point of view of calculative rationality, God is nonetheless present. This presence, however, cannot be pinned down to any particular historical event or theological formula. The divine withdraws from such attempts, and yet it leaves behind "hints" of its presence.³⁹ This emphasis is a staple element of Heidegger's philosophical theology. As I have already discussed, beginning in the years immediately following World War I, Heidegger attempted to thematize this elusive "objectivity" (*Gegenständlichkeit*) of God within finite, temporal, historical reality. Heidegger picks up on the "scandal"

³⁶ Ibid., 50. In translation: "arriving gods."

³⁷ Ibid. In translation: "You've heard and comprehended the stranger's tongue, / Interpreted their soul! For the yearning man / The hint sufficed, because in hints from / Time immemorial the gods have spoken."

³⁸ See Otto Pöggeler, *The Paths of Heidegger's Life and Thought*, trans. John Bailiff (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities, 1997), 223.

³⁹ Similarly, in his WS 1920–21 lecture course, Heidegger stresses that, despite the "incalculability" of the advent of the "day of the Lord," a "living effective connection" nonetheless obtains between God and the community of faith (G60 95/66).

of the cross, the historical event of the “proclamation,” the expectant faith of the community, the inwardness of the mystic, and *facies cordis* of Augustine’s disquieted soul as points at which the elusive “objectivity” of God can be located. Hölderlin’s formulation of the “hints” of God in the “lightning bolts” of poetic inspiration and historical cataclysms provides Heidegger with a new vocabulary for working out these ideas. However, as is the case with his philosophical theology as a whole, Heidegger himself never gives us much more than suggestive “hints” about the direction he is ultimately working in.

In a 1943 address given on the occasion of the centennial of Hölderlin’s death, Heidegger revisits the theological dimensions of the poet’s work. Commenting on the elegy “Heimkunft,” Heidegger picks up on the poet’s experience of the “highest” as something ultimately inexpressible (G4 26–27/45). The poet can merely point to where God dwells, to some future event of revelatory disclosure: “Nenn’ ich den Hohen dabei? Unschickliches lieben ein Gott nicht, / Ihn zu fassen, ist fast unsere Freude zu klein. / Schweigen müssen wir oft; es fehlen heilige Nahmen, / Herzen schlagen und doch bleibt die Rede zurück?”⁴⁰ Once again, the God is “missing,” and yet sends “greetings” to the poet, who must pass them on to the people (G4 28/46). Heidegger understands the poetic vocation in this way: “Thus, for the poet’s care, there is one possibility: without fear of appearing godless, he must remain near to the god’s absence, and wait long enough in this prepared nearness to the absence, until out of the nearness to the missing god there is granted an originaive word to name the high one” (G4 28/46–47).

This passage quite clearly recalls Heidegger’s own self-understanding, articulated during the 1920s, as someone engaged in the project of philosophical theology. In WS 1921–22, Heidegger suggests that, while standing “apart from” or “away from” (*weg*) God, the philosopher nonetheless stands “near” (*bei*) him in a difficult relation. Later, in 1928, Heidegger too confesses that he is willing to endure the label of “atheism” in order to avoid the pitfalls of popular religiosity and philosophical monotheism. This difficult position is necessitated, for Heidegger, by a full appreciation of Luther’s critique of the “theology of glory.” Recall that the “theology of glory” is characterized by the attempt to domesticate the free self-disclosure of God in the fold of Aristotelian metaphysics. The “theologian of the cross,” by contrast, is

⁴⁰ Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, 164. In translation: “Him, the most High, should I name then? A god does not love what’s unseemly / Our joy is too small to embrace and to hold him. / Silence often behooves us: lacking in holy names, / May hearts beat high, while the lips hesitate, wary of speech?” (translation modified).

open to the paradoxical revelation of God in historical particularity, a revelation that can be neither anticipated nor demanded. Heidegger's own self-understanding as a "philosophical theologian of the cross" clearly finds its counterpart in the poet's patient waiting for "holy names" in "Heimkunft."

Many of the theological themes that Heidegger picks up on in his earlier readings of Hölderlin resurface in his 1946 essay "Wozu Dichter?" The essay as a whole is largely devoted to Rilke, not to Hölderlin. However, the title comes from Hölderlin's famous elegy "Brot und Wein."⁴¹ Heidegger points out that, as befits the elegiac tone of the poem, the question "What are poets for?" arises in the midst of Hölderlin's experience of "God's keeping himself afar, by 'God's absence [Fehl]'" (G5 269/200). Heidegger had treated of this idea of God's "absence" in the 1934–35 lecture course. The phrase itself, it will be recalled, comes from the ode "Dichterberuf," in which Hölderlin castigates the abuse of divine, life-giving forces by human beings. In "Brot und Wein," Hölderlin describes how human beings squandered the gifts of the gods and how for the "schwaches Gefäß" of humanity the "Fülle" of the divine is often too much to bear.⁴² Heidegger draws attention to the fact that in both "Dichterberuf" and "Brot und Wein," Hölderlin puts forth the claim that human beings must endure the "holy night" of the absence of the divine in gratitude and anticipation. The lines from "Dichterberuf" run: "Furchtlos bleibt aber, so er es muß, der Mann / Einsam vor Gott, es schützt die Einfalt ihn, / Und keiner Waffen brauchts und keiner / Listen, so lange, bis Gottes Fehl hilft."⁴³

The task of the poet, as Heidegger then reads Hölderlin, is to pre-

⁴¹ The relevant lines run: "Indessen dünket mir öftens / Besser zu schlafen, wie so ohne Genossen zu seyn, / So zu harren und was zu thun indeß und zu sagen, / weiß ich nicht und wozu Dichter in dürftiger Zeit" (Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, 156). In translation: "But meanwhile too often I think it's / Better to sleep than to be friendless as we are, alone, / Always waiting, and what to do or to say in the meantime / I don't know, and why are there poets in lean years?" (translation modified).

⁴² Ibid., 156. In translation: "frail vessel" and "fullness."

⁴³ Ibid., 82. In translation: "Man however remains, as he must, fearlessly / alone before God, innocence protects him / and he needs no weapons and no / ruses for the duration until God's absence helps." This is Richard Unger's translation. See Unger, *Friedrich Hölderlin*, 64. On p. 65, Unger summarizes the principal thrust of Hölderlin's reflections. What he says about "Dichterberuf" is also, as Heidegger recognizes, true of "Brot und Wein": "The poets must now endure the night of divine absence in innocence and gratitude; eventually the divine absence will 'help' us, paradoxically, by making us strong enough to withstand the divine presence, which will be manifest as soon as our capabilities permit. It is, finally, the 'poet's vocation,' then, to endure deprivation and to proclaim his knowledgeable gratitude toward an obscure God until other men have also come to participate in this attitude so that they, too, may eventually face the presence of the fully manifest 'Angel of Day,' Apollo, the deity as revealed in light."

pare for a proper residence of God, by enduring the “holy night” of the world, the “abyss” of the concealment of the divine (G5 271/201–202). In “Dichterberuf” and in “Brot und Wein,” this “holy night” of the divine absence is necessitated by the titanic aspirations of humanity. On the other hand, Hölderlin also suggests that the frailty of human nature is such that it cannot withstand the full presence of the divine.⁴⁴ Quoting again from “Brot und Wein,” Heidegger asserts that “the gods who ‘once were here’ ‘return’ only ‘at the proper time’—namely, when there is a turn among men in the right place in the right way” (G5 271/201).

In these brief and suggestive passages, Heidegger revisits and expands upon the theme of divine “absence” that he had explored earlier in the 1934–35 lectures. While this “absence” is certainly ominous and painful for human beings, it is ultimately fraught with promise. On the one hand, the divine withholds itself from the titanic aspirations of humanity. As in Luther’s “theology of the cross,” God “hides” himself in order to defeat the pride and presumption that are the ultimate source of the alienation between God and humanity. In poems like “Dichterberuf” and “Brot und Wein,” Hölderlin also suggests that the overcoming of this alienation requires a shift in the attitudes of human beings toward the divine. In the “holy night” of the divine absence, the only way to enjoy an effective connection with God is to adopt attitudes of expectancy, endurance, and gratitude. This is an idea that first enters Heidegger’s conceptual vocabulary in WS 1920–21, where he thematizes faith, hope, and eschatological anticipation as the basic intentional stances of the primitive church. The claim is that the mysterious “absence” of God calls for a special response on the part of human beings.

Heidegger dwells at length on this claim in “Wozu Dichter?” Following a brief reference to “Titanien,” he asserts: “The mortal who is to reach into the abyss rather than or differently from others experiences the marks [*Merkmale*] that the abyss observes [*vermerkt*]. These, for the poet, are the tracks of the fugitive gods. This track, in Hölderlin’s experience, is what Dionysus, the wine-god, brings down for the Godless during the darkness of their world’s night. For the god of the vine preserves in it and in its fruit the essential mutuality of earth and sky as the site of the nuptials of men and gods” (G5 271/202).

Abiding in the “absence” or “hiddenness” of God, the poet is attentive to the traces or tracks of the God. This image of the “tracks” of

⁴⁴ A similar idea emerges in the fragmentary hymn “Titanen,” where Hölderlin writes of the “Abgrund” in which new light eventually dawns.

God also comes from "Brot und Wein": "Weil er bleibet und selbst die Spur der entflohenen Götter / Götterlosen hinab unter das Finstere bringt."⁴⁵ The "bread and wine" of the title of the elegy are reminders of "der Himmlischen, die sonst / Da gewesen und die kehren in richtiger Zeit."⁴⁶ The notion of the "tracks" (*Spuren*) of the absent gods calls to mind Heidegger's earlier discussion of the "hints" (*Winke*) of the gods, that is, about the mysterious and elusive presence of the divine within historical reality. Heidegger is interested in Hölderlin here for his vision of the poetic vocation as attentiveness to this elusive presence. This same interest can be found in his readings of mystics such as Bernard of Clairvaux and Theresa of Avila, for whom the soul is "somehow" the "site for God and the divine," the "*habitation of God*" (G60 336/254). Similarly, the elusive presence of God can be thematized in the eschatological anticipation of the primitive church, in Luther's understanding of faith, and in Augustine's *facies cordis*.

What is new in "Wozu Dichter?" is the appeal to tangible, physical manifestations of this elusive presence that is held to in memory and in expectation. This is, of course, a major theme not only in the Judeo-Christian tradition but also in Hölderlin's poetry. The premier Christian example is precisely the "bread and wine" of the Eucharistic feast. In a later version of the hymn "Patmos," Hölderlin evokes the inauguration of the Eucharist by Christ: "Er sah aber der achtsame Mann / Das Angesicht des Gottes, / Damals, da, beim Geheimnisse des Weinstoks sie / Zusammensaßen, zu der Stunde des Gastmals."⁴⁷ As Heidegger points out, Hölderlin links Christ and Dionysus together in his poetry, for example, in "Der Einzige." The Eucharist is, preeminently, an act of remembrance and of hope. The bread and wine point beyond themselves, like "hints" or "tracks," to a reality that is not fully manifest, but is nonetheless real. On Heidegger's reading, the job of the poet in a "destitute time" is to attend to these "hints" or "tracks" and so to keep alive the remembrance and expectation of the divine in the present "night" of the world. He writes, "Poets are mortals who gravely sing the wine-god and sense [*spüren*] the track [*Spur*] of the fugitive gods; they stay on the gods' track, and so they blaze [*spuren*] a path for their mortal relations, a path towards the turning point" (G5 272/202).

⁴⁵ Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, 158. In translation: "Since it lasts and conveys the trace of the gods now departed / Down to the godless below, into the midst of their gloom."

⁴⁶ Ibid., 158. In translation: "the Heavenly who once were / Here and shall come again, come when their advent is due."

⁴⁷ Ibid., 248. In translation: "But the attentive man saw / The face of God, / At that time, when over the mystery of the vine / They sat together, at the hour of the communal meal."

IV. CONCLUSION

My goal in this essay has been to examine some of Heidegger's more well-known interpretations of Hölderlin's poetry, searching for traces of Heidegger's own philosophical theology in these readings. Beginning in the early 1920s, Heidegger began to develop a distinctive philosophical theology that he never fully articulated but that he revisited again and again throughout his career. His position was decisively impacted by his reading of Luther, whose critique of the "theology of glory" in the name of the "hidden God" defined the direction that Heidegger took in his own reflections.

Heidegger had always been interested in the philosophical potential of poets like Hölderlin and Rilke, even from his student days. In the mid-1930s, he began to read Hölderlin in earnest, a move that profoundly reflected the character of Heidegger's thought as a whole. Among the many themes that occupied him throughout his engagement with Hölderlin's work were those germane to his own inchoate philosophical theology: the "absence" of God, the phenomenology of religious experience, the elusive presence of the divine in historical life, and the critique of philosophical monotheism. Heidegger found in Hölderlin a new, more flexible vocabulary with which to express these themes.

Honor and God*

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In *Cur Deus Homo* (completed in 1098), St. Anselm of Canterbury famously argued for the necessity of the incarnation.¹ God had to become human in order to repay a debt—a debt of honor. By sinning, humans have dishonored God, and God’s honor must be restored. The only possible way for God to regain this honor lost, argued Anselm, was for God to become human. Now there are enormous and plentiful problems with this whole line of argument: Isn’t it presumptuous to speculate why God must do anything at all? Why construe sin in terms of debt? If sin is a debt, why is it a debt of honor? How could humans have such power as to bring dishonor upon the Almighty? If there were such a debt of honor, how could it be repaid at all, much less by one human for all humans, even if that one human was somehow also divine?

But rather than attempting to address these weighty substantive theological questions, I want instead to focus on something undoubtedly central to Anselm’s argument that is largely ignored or dismissed today: the concept of honor.² For many moderns, I suspect, this concept

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¹ The most useful English translation is St. Anselm, “Why God Became a Man,” in *Anselm of Canterbury*, trans. Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson, 4 vols. (Toronto: Edwin Mellen, 1974), 3:39–137.

² David Brown, for example, says that honor is not a concept “that contemporary Christians customarily employ to describe their relationship with God” (“Anselm on Atonement,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, ed. Brian Davies and Brian Leftow [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 290). R. W. Southern notes that “Anselm’s feudal imagery is not likely

is problematic in so many ways as to be unusable—and not just in theology. In this article I explore how honor might become a more useful theological concept today.³ My inquiry is therefore a metatheological one: I seek to rehabilitate the concept of honor for possible use in a substantive theology, not to construct such a theology. Of course, honor is not the only traditionally rooted concept of potential utility to substantive theology today, and it doubtless will remain a highly problematic notion to many moderns. But while acknowledging honor's limits and dangers, I nonetheless seek to illuminate some brighter possibilities—even, or especially, “for us.”

Let me emphasize that I will be dealing with honor in theology and not in religion, more generally. Doubtless there are many and varied contexts within human religious life—religious institutions, practices, roles, relationships—where honor has been and remains prominent. Think, for example, of the various titles of respect and deference within a hierarchical institution such as the Roman Catholic Church, where honor is given and received on a regular basis. But I want to exclude all such (“merely human”) uses of honor in religion. Instead, I will focus on honor's use in purportedly transcendent contexts—either for some relation between humans and the transcendent or for the transcendent itself. To focus even more narrowly, I will confine myself to monotheistic contexts and so consider purported human relations to God, as well as depictions of God—theology in its root meaning. My concern is for the potential use of the concept of honor in theology, as a monotheistic concept.⁴

at first sight to commend his thought to modern readers, and it has offered an easy target for indignation and ridicule” (*St. Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990], 221).

³ I seek to make my analysis useful for many different kinds of substantive theologies, while realizing that some points may favor certain traditional theologies over others.

⁴ Two further caveats: (a) I am concerned here with theology as such and not with the sociological context out of which theology develops its concepts and to which it makes appeal. My focus is on the normative use of the concept of honor in substantive (first-order) theology, whether that theology is confessional, systematic, apologetic, or philosophical. My approach contrasts with that of Marilyn Adams (“Symbolic Value: Honor and Shame,” in her *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999], chap. 6), who uses anthropological analyses of biblical times (e.g., by Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 2nd ed. [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993]; and Jerome Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998]) to make substantive theological points. Instead, I aim to view the concept of honor more broadly, neither presupposing nor precluding the ancient Near Eastern conception of honor that Adams employs. (b) I focus almost exclusively on traditional Christian monotheism, but I believe most of my points can be extrapolated to other monotheistic traditions and to different conceptions of the divine.

I. RESUSCITATING THE CONCEPT OF HONOR

I begin with some general comments about the place of the concept of honor in contemporary Western society. As Peter Berger observed thirty-five years ago, honor is a concept that seems to have grown obsolete—a concept once vibrant in traditional hierarchical societies but lacking appeal and application in modern mass egalitarian societies.⁵ In short, honor has lost its sociological home, and it is useless for moderns, much less for postmoderns, aside from various deviant subcultures. Further, honor has unsettling, indeed at times repulsive, overtones: think only of the “honor” of antebellum Southern slave masters, male supremacists, gang members, Mafiosi, Balkan blood feuders, honor killers, and so forth. Such honor may be recognized as a concept for others to use, but surely it is not one that we want for ourselves. Finally, although honor was classically considered a moral virtue by the likes of Aristotle and his intellectual heirs, it seems adventitious and external to the moral life—resting on the regard of others, a matter of mere reputation—and one may regard it as well-ignored today.⁶ Thus, there seem to be very good reasons for putting honor on the shelf: it is obsolete, offensive, and inessential. And if honor in general is shelved, there is no use for it in theology.

This story is popular, but rumors of honor’s demise are, like reports of Mark Twain’s death, at best exaggerated. There is, I believe, something perennially relevant about honor, not least in theology. To be sure, honor is more visible in certain cultures like Homeric Greece, chivalric Europe, or Victorian England, but I believe it also permeates every society, in ways both named and unnoticed. Its rudiments are found, for example, in any society’s concern for reputation and “good name,” in recognition of status and achievement, in loyalty to group, in regard for the respect and esteem of others, and in feelings of resentment and unfairness. Honor’s often unrecognized pervasiveness is one reason why its theological use can make sense today. But even if

⁵ Peter Berger, “On the Obsolescence of Honor,” *European Journal of Sociology* 11 (1970): 339–47; reprinted in Peter Berger, Brigitte Berger, and Hansfried Kellner, *The Homeless Mind* (New York: Vintage, 1974).

⁶ Compare Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985), s.v. τιμή, particularly 4:3–4; and Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C. I. Litzinger, 2 vols. (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964), III.i.28,63, and *Summa Theologiae* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode; New York: McGraw-Hill, various dates) 2a2ae,57–154, esp. Qs63,81,129. Aquinas considers honor to be the heart of religion: “The good to which religion is directed is giving due honour to God; and honour is due on account of excellence” (Bonum autem ad quod ordinatur religio est exhibere Deo debitum honorem; Honor autem debetur alicui ratione excellentiae) (S.T. 2a2ae,81,art4res). Since God’s infinite excellences surpass all others, God is due a special kind of honor: *latría*, as opposed to *dulia*, veneration owed angels and saints as participating in God’s glory.

honor were not so pervasive, certain concepts of honor might still be theologically attractive if they gave natural expression to central facets of the divine-human relationship, or of the divine itself, as they are viewed by a particular theological tradition.

My project here is necessarily limited. I cannot hope to show the full range of honor's reach into all societies—not just in so-called honor and shame cultures but also in our own modern, liberal mass democracies—but I do hope to make some concepts of honor seem more attractive to at least some theologians working today. Still, it matters greatly which concepts of honor are on offer. A vital initial step in this project is to clarify the various concepts of honor. I have come to believe that at least some of the usual disdain or denial of honor is due to conceptual confusion among these concepts, and that once the various senses of “honor” are sorted through, the prospects for normative use of the concept are greatly improved. In that spirit, I will distinguish among five concepts of honor.⁷

It is important to note that the following analysis is not an account of any particular conception of honor embedded in some local social context. Two implications of that statement need special emphasis: (1) I seek concepts that are applicable across human cultures—human “universals,” if you like. I believe that the concepts of honor I explicate can be applied not only to traditional “honor and shame cultures” but also to other cultures—in particular, to our own today. Doubtless, the ways we think about and value (or disvalue) honor today will differ from the ways others—for example, those living in biblical times and lands—have understood and valued honor. But the hinge of this essay is that we are not confined to thinking about honor only in such culturally delimited ways. (2) We should distinguish between “concept” and “conception”: there may be various conceptions of a single concept. In particular, different societies may have different conceptions of what I term “personal honor” (see below), with different honor codes and loyalties to different honor groups, but all alike may be instances of the same concept of personal honor.

I turn, then, to the five concepts of honor. First, conferred honor is, primarily, the regard, esteem, or respect given by one or more persons to someone on some attributed basis; secondarily, it is some token of this regard—gifts, rewards, attention, and the like. Conferred honor is a gift from others, resting on their view of the honoree; it is basically reputation. Even though the honoree in a sense “has” the conferred

⁷ I do not claim that these are the only concepts of honor, but they certainly map much of honor's domain.

honor, it is really controlled by the ones who confer it; should they change their minds (and decide that the honoree doesn't really merit the gift, or that the standards have been misconstrued, or even that the attributed basis is mistaken), then the honor can be withdrawn or canceled. Conferred honor and honors are external, resting in others' preferences and choices.

Second, recognition honor is publicly noticing and awarding due esteem for excellences that merit or deserve such esteem; it is showing, in a public way, through word and deed, that one recognizes worth. The recognized honoree need not be superior to the honorer (who may deserve recognition for the very same or other excellences) but is superior to many or most who lack the excellences (at least to this degree). Conferred honors may follow, but then they have a different basis: not because they are attributed by the honorer but because they are intrinsically possessed by the honoree. The honorer is not in control of the honor; indeed she is duty-bound to recognize excellence—the recognition is due.⁸

Third, positional honor is a matter of being, having, or doing something that positions one "above" others in a social group; it is relative to the others' accomplishments or status. People with positional honor are society's "winners," in both literal and extended senses: they outstrip others in status or achievement, they come out "on top," and they succeed. Such success is an honor quite apart from how it is regarded by others, though, of course, those with positional honor usually demand and receive conferred honors as their due; at any rate, positional honor may be valued for itself, whether or not conferred honors follow, just as conferred honors may be given for something other than positional achievement or status.

Recognition honor differs from positional honor: social position or achievement is not the same as excellence—not the only kind of excellence nor always an excellence. Further, though both are relational notions, positional honor is viewed from the standpoint of the honoree who is "above" the others, while recognition honor is seen from the standpoint of the honorer, who gives due acknowledgment of another's worth or value. Finally, there is this asymmetry: positional honor can exist without being recognized, but recognition honor cannot exist without excellence to recognize.⁹

⁸ Conferred honors are typically given in purported recognition of socially agreed excellences. It is not easy to sort out recognition from attribution in such cases, even though the concepts are distinct.

⁹ In an ideally decent society, these three types of honor might coincide: honor is conferred and high position achieved and merited by those, and only those, of recognized excellence. Alas, this possible world is not our actual world.

Fourth, commitment honor: While conferred, positional, and recognition honors centrally relate persons to persons, commitment honor relates persons to something more abstract—to principles and propositions lodged in such speech acts as promises, agreements, or contracts. One honors some such abstraction by being true or loyal to it, by upholding it, by sticking to it—in short, by being committed to it. Moreover, while conferred and positional honors magnify the honoree, commitment honor tethers the honorer. Commitment to something requires understanding and accepting it, to some degree, but also actively supporting it while refraining from disparaging it. It is an important feature in the character of someone who has a fifth kind of honor, to which I now turn.

I construe personal honor as a virtue of an individual in a certain social context—as having an effective sense of honor. An effective sense of honor means adhering firmly to the honor code of some honor group—understanding what that honor code requires, prohibits, and permits; being able to act according to the code; being motivated to do so; and effectively willing it.¹⁰ Moreover, this commitment runs deep; a person with an effective sense of honor regards that honor as being one of the more important features of herself, almost necessarily connected to her sense of self. Without her honor, she is diminished, reduced, defiled, ruined, perhaps even to the point of being unable to face the prospect of living in dishonor.

Even though personal honor connects deeply with an individual's sense of identity and worth, nonetheless, such honor is intelligible only against a certain social backdrop; it is commitment not only to a code but also to a community. It involves belonging to a certain social group, the honor group, consisting of all and only those members who (*a*) are honor capable, that is, have the capacity to act honorably and to be honorable; (*b*) have the same sense of honor, that is, understand and are effectively committed to the same honor code; and (*c*) mutually recognize one another as members of the same honor group. Note that some may lack the capacity or desire needed to belong to the honor group and that, even for those who have them, such capacity and desire have to be actualized through instruction and practice; honor requires effort and talent to achieve, even when it looks effort-

¹⁰ An honor code need not be codified. As I use the term, "honor code" encompasses the myriad norms of conduct that are (to be) held as matters of honor in some particular honor group. Not all norms shared by an honor group are matters of honor. Further, the norms of an honor code need not be very specific—they could be broad and vague principles or standards. Finally, honor groups often share and always permit ideals of aspiration that transcend the honor code.

less. Note further that belonging to an honor group means adhering to an honor code that is socially shared and publicly supported (i.e., publicly within the honor group). Honor is enacted on a public stage that is a union shop, even if not everyone belongs or can belong to the local guild. Finally, and perhaps surprisingly, an honor group is a society of equals—all members have the same standards of honor to uphold, all are presumed equally capable of upholding them, and all are deemed equally honorable until proven otherwise. Such honor equality is, of course, compatible with many other kinds of inequality that form the bases of conferred, positional, recognition, and commitment honor. It is also compatible with some members exemplifying the group's standards of personal honor to a superior degree.

Loyalty to an honor community is not commitment to an abstraction; rather, it is involvement with the actual individuals comprising that honor group—recognizing in myriad ways that they belong to the same honor community as oneself, even as they likewise recognize oneself. Honor is verifiable and constantly verified, in all the myriad actions and interactions of the members of the honor group. Of course, it is possible to seek to acquire personal honor for other purposes (conferred honors, for example), though motivations may change as one internalizes the honor code. And it is also possible to act honorably, so far as public detection can reach, while remaining personally dishonorable.¹¹ The point is, rather, that public behavior normally displays to others not merely actions in conformity with the honor code but also the intentions, beliefs, and motivations that lie behind it. An honor group can rely upon its members only if each member's commitment to the honor code and to the honor group goes deeper than some utilitarian calculation about the results of so committing oneself. The credit of trust extended from one honor group member to another presumes this deeper commitment, and so the creditor presumes that he can (usually) detect such commitment in others. Personal honor is public honor even if it is not reducible to deeds.

Personal honor involves the mutual respect of other members of the honor group: such respect is being valued for oneself as a member of the group and differs from esteem, which is being valued simply for

¹¹ There are at least two ways this can occur: the usual case, in which there is a secret act of dishonor that continues to fester so long as one remains committed to honor and, perhaps the more interesting case, in which personal honor is regarded merely as a means to some further end, to be discarded if and when the two come into conflict, even if such conflict never occurs.

talents or achievements.¹² Such respect by others is also, and necessarily, self-respect, and normally it is deeply treasured. Further, personal honor is not an inherited or conferred status but a personal achievement; it may be gained, lost, and, sometimes, regained through actions and inactions.¹³ One acquires personal honor by acquiring those habits of heart and mind that dispose one thoroughly and intuitively to follow the honor code and to be loyal to one's honor group. Honorable character is both learned through and expressed in honorable actions.

At the heart of personal honor is the virtue I will call trustworthiness.¹⁴ An honorable person can be counted on to follow the honor group's code and to remain steadfastly loyal to other honor group members—and to do both without hesitation, question, or even much reflection. The point is not simply predictability but, rather, reliability—an honorable person can be relied on by others to act in solidarity with and for the (members of the) honor group. An honorable person can be trusted to reliably and consistently guide her actions by her internalized sense of honor, and she is worth trusting because of her reliability.

Finally, personal honor is not necessarily moral or religious. The honor code of an honor group may command or prohibit acts that are morally indifferent (e.g., dress codes or the rules of hospitality in the Balkans) or even contrary to morality (e.g., the honor codes of street

¹² Note that this is not quite moral respect—valuing individual persons qua individuals rather than qua members of some group. But it is not incompatible with moral respect; respect is many faceted.

¹³ One might divide an honor code into three parts (all codes will have the first and second parts, but only some the third): (i) the primary code, consisting of rules expressing which actions are required, prohibited, and permitted to gain and retain honor in that group (this might in turn break into two parts, with one part of the code serving as entrance requirements and the other as ongoing membership requirements); (ii) the secondary penal code, consisting of what must be done when someone breaks the primary code (sometimes penance but more typically exile or exclusion from the group, and sometimes worse); and (iii) the tertiary redemption code, consisting of what is required of those who, having broken the primary code and received the penalty, now seek readmittance to the honor group. (There might even be rules for recidivists, though few if any honor groups tolerate more than two strikes; if it can be regained at all, honor cannot be regained easily or repeatedly.) An alternative division of an honor code is into rules regarding members and those regarding non-members.

¹⁴ Other virtues, moral and nonmoral, will surely connect with honor in various interesting ways. Tracing these connections would provide revealing glimpses into these other virtues, as well as into honor. Aquinas, for example, treats the traditional cardinal virtues of prudence, courage, and temperance as all having forms of honor, and it remains only to relate them to honor in religion, an associated part of the fourth (and in some senses preeminent) cardinal virtue, justice. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 7:122–23, notes three main uses of “honor” in Aquinas: giving of honor (a matter of justice), striving for honor (part of courage), and feelings of honor (part of temperance).

gangs and the Mafia), and the same is true of religion. Further, honor is relative; different honor groups have different honor codes, and honor codes may change over time. But even so, it is possible for an honor code to be morally or religiously acceptable, when it contains or is constrained by moral or religious principles.¹⁵

Now whatever strictures may be lodged against some of these concepts of honor and indeed against many local interpretations of all of them, including personal honor, I do think that some of them are worth retaining for their theological fertility, to which I now turn, in two sections—the first, on human relations to God; the second, on God alone.

II. HONORING GOD

Honoring God is a prominent feature in monotheistic religion, where humans give “glory, laud, and honor” to their divine Creator, Lord, and Redeemer. Yet it may seem theologically suspect, in various ways.

1. Conferred honor, in giving the gift of high reputation to God, seems to elevate creature over Creator, foolishly imagining that the human honorer is in control of honors given to God (since humans are free to choose, alter, or reject the attributed basis of honor). Moreover, why should God need or even want such conferred honors—is God somehow supposed to be elevated by possessing a good reputation among humans? Is not offering such conferred honor mere idolatry?

2. Recognition honor’s obligation to honor excellence is obscure: why should one publicly recognize excellence or worth? What is the basis of this supposed obligation? And from God’s standpoint, why should God want to have God’s excellence recognized by creatures? Is this not the pitiful desire to be flattered by one’s inferiors?

3. Doubtless, the Creator does have a higher positional honor than any and all of the creatures, but this status is not one to which any creature could possibly aspire (it is an unavoidable and not an achieved status), and so, apparently, it is meaningless to creatures and possibly to God as well (even though we have it on good authority that God is jealous of His unique position in human estimation).

4. Commitment honor falls far short of what religion requires, for it is honoring some abstraction and not honoring God; it is at best (part of) a moral virtue, not a theological virtue of faith, hope, or love in

¹⁵ Arguably, honor can reinforce morality through its necessary group solidarity. But this reinforcement is contingent upon honor being constrained by or consistent with morality.

direct relation to God. Is not honoring God more than honoring a commitment to God?

5. Finally, personal honor places God and humans in an honor group where all are equally honorable, in various ways (equally capable of the same kind of adherence to the same honor code, equally loyal to other group members, and equally aware of one another's honor). But how can God be equal in honor (or anything else) with creatures? Further, personal honor is a virtue of character, acquired and lost by humans through disposition, training, and practice. But how could God acquire or lose personal honor?

All these suspicions have considerable force, yet in the end they do not block application of concepts of honor to human-divine relations. Admittedly, there is little to be said for conferred theological honor and honors; honor as reputation is precisely what has given honor such a bad name. But the other four concepts of honor have the potential to shed light on the relation of humans to God; all can play valuable complementary roles in theistic religion's sense of proper relation to God. They are all integral to a full sense of honoring God, and honoring God is what humans ought to do from a theistic perspective.

A. *Recognition Honor*

God is not merely a uniquely potent Creator but also a uniquely supreme locus of excellence; God is great and God is good. God's recognition honor has two parts: (i) God's excellence that claims recognition by any being, hence by any creature, and (ii) any creature's (dim) apprehension of that excellence, expressed publicly in appropriate word and deed.¹⁶ Recognition honor of God is inseparable from recognition of God's excellence as having a claim to be recognized. Such recognition of God's honor is as essential to being a self-aware creature as understanding that one is a (self-aware) creature. Such recognition is worship in its root sense of "worth-ship"—recognizing and

¹⁶ It would take a book, or a library, to describe which words and deeds are appropriate. Aquinas considers such "acts of religion" as devotion, prayer, adoration, sacrifice, oblations, tithes, vows, and oaths (S.T. 2a2ae, 82–91), as well as other associated parts of justice: piety, respect (*observantia*), service (*dulia*), obedience, gratitude, vindication (*vindicatio*), veracity (*veritate*), even affability (*amicitia*), liberality, and equity (*epieikeia*) (S.T. 2a2ae, 101–20). In discussing human response to divine honoring, Karl Barth for once limits himself to only four points: thankfulness, humility, "free humour," and modesty (*The Doctrine of Creation*, vol. 3 of *Church Dogmatics*, trans. A. T. Mackay, T. H. L. Parker, Harold Knight, Henry A. Kennedy, and John Marks [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961]), pt. 4:663–65). This is clearly a vast topic.

respecting the worth of God—and culpable failure to recognize God's excellence is blasphemy.¹⁷

Whether or not all excellence deserves or is due the honor of recognition is arguable, but surely this one instance is indisputable: supreme excellence cannot be understood without recognizing its claim to be honored through some public expression of recognition. To fail to honor (recognize) God's supreme excellence is to doubt either God's excellence or God's existence. From God's standpoint (or so a creature might imagine), any creature capable of recognizing divine excellence who fails to do so has an unsound relation to God: by not giving God the honor due God, the creature has insulted God, has offended against God's honor.¹⁸ So recognition honor is essential to a creature's proper relation to God—even if God doesn't need it, creatures do.

B. Positional Honor

A Creator-God's position is absolutely unique: there can be at most one creator of all things seen and unseen. Whether or not there is a being that actually has this position and, if so, whether God is that being and has that position necessarily or contingently, it remains true that, at most, one being could actually have this position. Moreover, this is a (one-many) relational position, necessarily implying superior status over against all possible creatures. God's eminence, God's unsurpassability, and God's perfection give God a unique position of honor, one unavailable to other beings (however much they might, ignorantly or perversely, wish it for themselves) and quite independent of their recognition. God possesses honor in being honorable—that is, not only capable of being honored but worthy of being honored—whether or not any creature recognizes that honor and gives God what God is due. This divine positional honor is indeed closely connected with creaturely recognition honor: God's positional honor (God's honorability) deserves the honor of others, their appropriate recognition,

¹⁷ Compare Edwin D. Craun, "'Inordinata Locutio': Blasphemy in Pastoral Literature, 1200–1500," *Traditio* 39 (1983): 135–62.

¹⁸ One might develop a fairly rich comprehensive doctrine of sin from this angle—one more example of honor's theological fruitfulness. But note that there could be forms of sinfulness peculiar to honor (honor's "dark side," one might say), for example, even when recognizing divine excellence, some of the public words and deeds might transmute into conferred honors, with the human honorer implicitly (and perhaps even unwittingly) claiming superiority through bestowing an unmerited gift upon God, instead of only giving God what is God's due.

and response to God's excellences. But even so, creatures couldn't recognize divine excellence unless God possessed the excellence they recognize.

A Creator in this sense is certainly "higher" than any creature is or could possibly be, but God's lofty position is not irrelevant to creatures. Of course, they would not be, or be creatures, unless created by a Creator, but more, realizing or not realizing their creatureliness is absolutely fundamental to their sense of self (if they have a sense of self). This is true in both senses of "realizing": both recognizing and actualizing. To recognize and actualize oneself as a self-aware creature is necessarily to glimpse, however obscurely, the positional honor of one's Creator. Divine "jealousy" is not the human emotion of vulnerable exclusivity but, rather, God's proper recognition of God's own status as Creator, entailing God's unwillingness to be mistaken for anything else or for anything else to be mistaken for God—at least this is how it appears to humans attempting to imagine God's point of view. From a theological perspective, human appreciation of divine positional honor is essential to a proper human relation to God, and such relation is bedrock for being human.

C. Commitment Honor

This type of honor does indeed fall short of full relationship to God, but, nonetheless, it cannot be lacking in such a full relationship. Honoring God in this sense is being committed to the principles that God exemplifies and obeying the commands God has given. It means recognizing these principles and commands, actively (and openly) supporting them, and not disparaging them (and also, I suppose, reacting in some way other than silence to those who do disparage them). Once again, whether or not God needs such honor, it seems clear that creatures do, if they are to be in proper relation to God. As to whether such commitment counts as a theological virtue, that depends on what one means by "theological": even if it is not a virtue that relates directly to God, it is one that relates to divine matters.¹⁹

¹⁹ Aquinas would not call it a full theological virtue, for it is part of religion, or an act of religion, and religion is fitting worship of God (*S.T.* 2a2ae, Q81, art5res), a virtue associated with, or part of, the cardinal moral virtue of justice but not considered under the trinity of supernatural virtues—faith, hope, and charity. But I think this is merely a terminological matter. Honoring God is a proper part of theology in any event.

D. Personal Honor

This is the most interesting case. This section will dwell on what it means to place God and humans in the same honor group, with its various implications of equality; the next section considers whether God can properly be said to have a sense of honor.

The first thing to notice is that while all members of an honor group are equal in various ways essential to honor (honor capability, commitment to honor, and mutual recognition of others' honor), this is perfectly compatible with inequality in certain other respects. For one, members of an honor group can exemplify the sense of honor of an honor group to a greater or lesser extent; some are better exemplars of the group's code of honor than others. Second, personal honor is not the only excellence, and some members may surpass other members in these other excellences. Third, the equality of personal honor is compatible with institutional and other lines of authority; one member of the honor group might have authority over others in various ways (though not on the grounds that he or she is more personally honorable than the others). Fourth, the members of the honor group can stand in different causal relations to the honor code held equally in common: for example, one or more of them could be the founder of the code and community, while others are followers.²⁰

God could be a member of an honor group with humans, sharing the same honor code and enjoying the mutual respect of every member as equally persons of honor, while at the same time occupying a supremely lofty position as Creator and Redeemer, exercising supreme authority as Lord, deserving recognition as unsurpassably excellent in all ways (including but not limited to personal honor), and serving as the founder and sole continuously sustaining member of the honor group and its code. So honoring God by recognizing the excellence of God's personal honor is at least compatible with recognition of the uniquely lofty status of God.

But further, there may be very good theological reasons for viewing God in terms of personal honor. First, and foremost to a revealed theological perspective, is authoritative witness in Scripture, and here there is ample evidence of the centrality of the concept of honor in the Hebrew and Christian Bibles.²¹ Of course, such evidence will be un-

²⁰ Compare Kant's distinction between being a member (*Glied*) and the head (*Oberhaupt*) of a kingdom of ends (*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* [Grounding of the metaphysics of morals], ed. Karl Vorländer [Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1965], 57 [Akademie ed., 4:433]).

²¹ Compare, for example, Adams, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God*; Barth L. Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, Society of Biblical Literature, Dissertation Series no. 160 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998); David A. DeSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and*

persuasive to those who don't share the assumption of divine inspiration of Scripture, those for whom the concept of honor is more revelatory of the Scripture-writers' social matrix than of divine communication, but believers can reverse this claim, holding that God chose to reveal divine truths through contemporary social arrangements and ideas.

Second, while it makes sense in general that a personal God would enter into personal relationships with human persons, what reason is there to construe these personal relationships in terms of personal honor? Surely there are other fundamental kinds of personal relationship—kinship, nurture, teaching, friendship, dialogue, command, and so forth. Why honor, specifically? Here I will venture some general remarks about the point of personal honor as a fundamental way of structuring community.

Honor groups are one, but only one, kind of social group. Members of an honor group are bound to one another through linkages of loyalty—mutually recognizing, trustworthy followers of the same code of honor. Such bonds at once promote the community's security, by providing reliable dependence on others' behavior, and also secure the individual's sense of self-worth, by providing the respect of others whom one respects. Personal honor is a way of affirming individual worth while securing community coherence and stability. In all this, note the centrality of respect—mutual other-respect of all group members and reflected self-respect as a necessary corollary. Personal honor grounds a community of respect.

Now one can easily imagine communities structured along other lines. One line is sheer force, the actual or threatened use of violence to enforce the will of the stronger; hierarchies result, and people know and keep their place out of fear. Another is kinship, which binds blood relatives with responsibilities measured out in intricate detail unto many generations. Another is affection, where mutually shared (though not necessarily equal) care and concern yoke friends and lovers of all kinds. Another is self-interested cooperation (or collaboration), where ego-oriented individuals seek to maximize their gains while minimizing their risks. Another is voluntary contract, where independent contractors bind themselves not only with their word in particular agreements but also with enforcement agencies to which they freely consent. But honor communities differ from all these other

Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), and *The Hope of Glory: Honor Discourse and New Testament Interpretation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999); Timothy S. Laniak, *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998); Malina, *The New Testament World*; and Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew*.

kinds of communities (though of course there are various similarities); they are distinctive in their egalitarian mutual regard, shared code, and sense of honor promoting trust and respect among honor group members. Since such honor communities are distinctive and valuable, there is reason to establish them, quite apart from the reasons for establishing (or not establishing) other types of communities.²²

It is admittedly quite speculative to suggest that a personal God seeking personal relationships with humans would have such a reason to enter into—or rather, to constitute—an honor group with these creatures, establishing a code of honor, adherence to which ensures, and recognizes, all members' senses of self-worth and other-worth. But it is no more speculative than most theology conducted from natural human reason, and if it chimes in with revelation, then so much the better. If such speculation has any merit at all, then theology might do well to follow St. Anselm's example in seeing human relation to God through the lens of honor—though not necessarily, of course, with Anselm's specifically feudal conception of honor. At the minimum, such speculation seems not only possible but possibly fruitful.

III. THE HONOR OF GOD

Along the lines I have been suggesting, it makes sense for humans to speak and think of honoring God and hence to honor God: honoring God is something that self-conscious creatures can do and indeed something they should do if God exists and establishes a community of honor with them. But what about the honor of God? Does it make equal sense to speak and think of God honoring humans (and possibly other creatures) or even of God's own honor? Again, I will suggest (partial) positive answers.

First of all, some concepts of honor (conferred, recognition, and commitment honor) are intrinsically relational. So far, we have seen how they relate humans (or possibly other creatures) to God or to principles about God, but can they be applied in the opposite direction, to relate God to creatures? Does it make any sense at all to speak of God honoring humans? Well, why not? What's to prevent God from conferring honors, recognizing the worth of other beings, honoring certain principles that others exemplify? Again, some will appeal to Scripture as warranting exactly that: God blesses Abraham and his seed (Genesis 17); notes the beauty of field flowers (Matt. 6:28–29); cares

²² Of course, the various bases of community can be variously combined—for example, in a community of both honor and love. Yet honor's contribution to such complexly based community remains distinctive.

for lost sheep (Matt. 18:12–14); loves God’s only Son (John 10:17); and identifies perfectly with the principle of ‘αγάπη (John 3:16). Karl Barth, in fact, treats divine honor in exactly this way, construing honor, in the context of the Creator’s command, as God’s honoring creatures with being, life, and particular purpose.²³ Moreover, from a nonrevelational standpoint, one can suggest that a personal God might well want to honor persons in these ways. Perhaps God wouldn’t have to single out some for conferred honors, but there seems to be nothing amiss in God’s doing so. Why couldn’t God have and express high regard for certain qualities, achievements, and actions by humans that God recognizes as excellent?²⁴ Likewise, God could honor principles of love, justice, and peace by being committed to them. This is a part of God’s truth or, rather, of God’s truthfulness, God’s steadfastness, and God’s reliability.²⁵

Second, the notion of positional honor is relational in a way that does not depend upon any apprehension, much less full recognition, by creatures. We have already noted the ways in which God’s position is immeasurably and unalterably above any creature’s position, but what sense can be given to a creature’s lower and indeed lowly position being honorable? Certainly lower positions as such are not much honored by humans. But perhaps God’s perspective is not ours. As Scripture has it, “Blessed are the poor in spirit”—or, as Jerome Neyrey persuasively translates, “*Honored* are the poor in spirit.”²⁶ More precisely, it may well be that in the community of personal honor that God seeks to establish, ordinary human ideas of high and low position are turned on their heads: God’s honor code requires not ambition, personal accomplishment, self-seeking, and social status but, rather, meekness, mercy, thirst for righteousness, purity of heart, and peacemaking (Matt. 5:5–9). It is hard enough for creatures to realize their creature-

²³ Barth, *The Doctrine of Creation*, 647–85. Barth’s extended discussion of the honor of humans as “an incomprehensible recognition of man on the part of God, an expression of His esteem, a distinction” (469) warrants much fuller treatment than I can provide here. Barth appears to rely particularly on recognition honor—human honor is “the just claim to special, particular and specific recognition” (654)—and he spells out several criteria of honorableness (656ff.). Barth also applies this notion of honor not only to humans but also to God: “God is the One who in His person and being and work has validity and worth, of supreme excellence and demanding recognition” (653; characteristically, Barth then exclaims, “He alone! *Soli Deo gloria!*”). So Barth would allow honoring God as well as God’s honor (in honoring humans), even while insisting that the former utterly rests on the latter.

²⁴ Such recognition might have the further desirable effect of stimulating creatures to similar recognition of other creatures’ excellences.

²⁵ There is this complication: While for humans conferred honor and recognition honor can easily diverge—where the attributed basis is not a genuine excellence in the honoree—for God, the distinction collapses: What God honors is honorable, and conversely.

²⁶ Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew*, 167; emphasis added.

liness, but to be told that humanity is honorable in humility may be more than we can grasp—or bear. Still, positional honor can play a useful role in a substantive theology, particularly one that relies not so much on human values and speculation as on divine commands and revelation.

But third, what about personal honor? Does it really make sense to speak of God possessing a sense of honor? Once again I ask, why not? God is certainly honor capable—indeed, God is supercapable of personal honor. God is so able to fulfill the letter and spirit of God's honor code and to honor all members of God's honor group that God cannot fail to do so. God is normally thought to be unsurpassably trustworthy, the central virtue in personal honor. God's Word is the only word on which creatures can ultimately, fully, absolutely rely for its truthfulness (not to mention its truth). God is steadfastly loyal to those who have faith in God, who embrace God's own code of honor, and who respect God as the founding member and Lord of the holy community. God unfailingly discerns honorable as well as dishonorable conduct in others, reaching into the inner recesses of the heart, and God reacts appropriately to creatures' recognition or lack of recognition of others (including God). God seeks a community of respect, on God's own terms of love. In short, it makes eminent sense that God could have a sense of personal honor.

To be sure, a divine sense of honor must differ immeasurably from any human sense of honor. Obviously, God will be exquisitely sensitive, in a way that escapes creatures' grasp and ken, to every punctilio of honor, but it would be unwise to insist on this point, upon pain of reducing God to a master legalist; more important is divine unerring observance of the spirit of the law, the full sense of honor that overflows any and all items of the honor code. Humans can gain and lose that sense, but God can neither lose nor gain it: so long as there is an honor community founded by God, divine personal honor is not only unfaltering but also inescapable. If one insists nonetheless that personal honor cannot be an intrinsic property of God because there is no sense of honor without a community of honor, and hence other members than God, then three lines of reply may be suggested:

- i) Perhaps the Trinity is a kind of eternal honor group, wherein divine honor is never gained or lost and never fails to be mutually and fully recognized.

- ii) Perhaps God always needs or wants personal relations with others and will not fail to create them and establish with them a community of honor; such a Kingdom (or series of Kingdoms) of God would be everlasting.²⁷
- iii) Perhaps honor communities come and go, and prior to establishing a community of honor with suitable creatures, God has no sense of honor and likewise has none after the community goes extinct. But in every honor group founded by God, so long as that group exists, God's honor is secure.²⁸

IV. CONCLUSION

I have tried to show how valuable to substantive theology concepts of honor might become—if they are suitably construed apart from feudal and other local interpretations. Concepts of honor help to situate appropriate religious attitudes and divine attributes in relational and indeed communal terms, particularly when it comes to personal honor. Such concepts illuminate many facets of human-divine and divine-human relations and may even shed some light on divinity itself. And in doing all this, we may even retrieve and reenergize a concept once considered vital to a great tradition of moral as well as theological thought.²⁹ These are not inconsiderable benefits.

Yet there is, I admit, more than a whiff of wild-eyed speculation in my whole discussion of the honor of God. The basic reason, of course, is that, apart from God's own self-disclosure, it may be impossible for creatures to understand their Creator.³⁰ If so, honor would be at best a concept applicable to God not as God is *in se* but only as God is

²⁷ It would be interesting to speculate whether this honorable Kingdom (or these Kingdoms) of God might approach, perhaps asymptotically, the inner relations of the Godhead.

²⁸ Further, a theologian might insist, it is precisely through the security of God's honor that human honor is most deeply secured, in the eyes not just of other humans, and subject to their vagaries, but more fundamentally in the eyes of God, who misses nothing and wavers not at all. Karl Barth is customarily eloquent on this theme: "That man was and is and will be from and in the hand of God, this precisely, no less and no more, is his honour, the special honour of every man, which he cannot alter, which he cannot diminish nor augment, which he cannot discard nor lose, which cannot be taken from him by others, just as he himself cannot create it or maintain it for himself" (Barth, *The Doctrine of Creation*, 650).

²⁹ Another benefit, one outside the scope of this article, is to play a role in recovering the concept of honor for contemporary use more generally, pruning it of some unfortunate historical associations (militarism, sexism, elitism, superficiality, hierarchy, and oppression, to name just a few) while exploring its richly multiple normative meanings. If the concept of honor can be useful in theology, why not elsewhere?

³⁰ And it may be even sinful to try to do so: thinking of relation to God in any human terms may be merely the vain human attempt to gain control over divine power and prerogative.

evident to humans in and through human-divine interaction. But this is a venerable position in theology with respect to many and perhaps all divine attributes, and it is fully consistent with another tradition: to continue to speak boldly of God's honor—indeed, even to think of defending God's honor. So at least I am not alone in my wild-eyed speculations.

But there is a final worry: Have I perhaps imposed my own culture-bound understanding of honor upon theology? What if my analysis of concepts of honor is as much tied to my times as Anselm's feudal conception of honor was tied to his times? I cannot rule out this possibility. But I would be content were my analysis to speak even half as well to theology today as Anselm's argument spoke to theology in the eleventh century.

Science, Rationality, and Theology*

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The rapid success of modern science is largely due to the ability of scientists to create idealizations or abstractions for the purpose of understanding some aspect of nature. But this success has come at the expense of preserving the unity and integrity of experience. Because abstractions break the unity of things directly experienced into a plurality of aspects, the unity and integrity of our common experience of the world is fractured when we do not attempt to relate these aspects to one another. Moreover, while abstractions are indispensable in enabling us to understand some aspect of nature, there is a tendency to identify the aspect with the whole. When we make a claim on behalf of an abstraction to cover more ground than is stated and implied in the purpose for which it was made, we distort what we are trying to understand by excluding alternative ways of understanding. In the absence of critical belief such an abstraction tends to decay into a dogmatically held ideology.

We see this not only in the transition from an Aristotelian conception of the universe to a Newtonian one, but in the transition from the paradigm of classical physics to the new paradigm of modern physics. Although classical physics was created for the purpose of explaining physical processes at the macroscopic scale, it was not equipped to explain processes for objects moving near the speed of light or for subatomic objects. The special theory of relativity and quantum theory demonstrated the scope and limitations of the abstractions embodied in the normal paradigm of classical physics. However, as John E. Smith argues, "an abstraction is seen as partial, *not from within* the purpose which controls it since it was made precisely to fulfill that purpose, but only in relation to some wider purpose which takes more into account. But the fact that an abstraction does not fulfill some other purpose does not preclude its being well founded within its own intent and

* For Missy and the memory of our beloved Kaija.

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under the control of its own purpose.”¹ Similarly, Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld suggest that creating a new scientific theory is not like destroying an old barn and erecting a skyscraper in its place. Rather, it is like climbing a mountain that gives us new and wider views. Although these views reveal unexpected connections between our starting point and its surroundings, the starting point still exists and can be seen. Only now it appears as an aspect or part of a wider view gained by the mastery of obstacles rather than the whole.²

This metaphor of scientific progress or discovery suggests a broader conception of rational inquiry that relates the analytic and synthetic functions of reason in a way that includes alternative ways of understanding the world and our place in it. The rise of modern science has eclipsed theology as a complementary and authoritative mode of understanding our common experience. The ideal model of rational inquiry extrapolated from the success of the physical sciences claims that scientific beliefs and practices are established and held upon the basis of strong evidence. In contrast, theological beliefs and practices are viewed with suspicion because they do not appear to be based upon evidence. The general suspicion of the rational underpinnings of religious beliefs has relegated theology to a second-class status, subject to the authority of science. The gap between the two cultures of science and theology has widened under the assumption that the epistemological foundations of physical science are well founded compared to those of theology and hence that the conflict between the two is rational or epistemological in nature.

In response, theologians and philosophers of religion may attempt to satisfy the foundationalist challenge by finding a general criterion for the directly evident in religious experience. Or, as I will urge, they may question whether the model of rational inquiry in science that pressures the project of rational justification in theology is valid. Beginning with the seminal work of Thomas S. Kuhn, I will argue that the structure of rational inquiry in physical science is hermeneutical like theology, and that not even the most conscientious scientist can live up to the ideal model of scientific inquiry. However, in order to avert the relativistic consequences of Kuhn’s position, I will argue for a hermeneutical model of rational inquiry based upon Niels Bohr’s principle of complementarity and correspondence principle. This model permits us to view science and theology as complementary interpretations of

¹ John E. Smith, “The Critique of Abstractions and the Scope of Reason,” in *Process and Divinity*, ed. William R. Reese and Eugene Freeman (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1964), 24–25.

² Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld, *The Evolution of Physics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1961), 152.

our common experience, rather than incommensurable systems of belief, that correspond in the limit where the scientific (causal) interpretation reduces to the theological (teleological) interpretation in illuminating our central place in the scheme of things.

THE NATURE OF SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY

The standard interpretation of the blackbody radiation problem credits Max Planck with the discovery of the concept of a restricted or discrete energy spectrum.³ Contrary to the standard interpretation, Kuhn argues that Albert Einstein and Paul Ehrenfest originated the concept.⁴ Based upon a historiographical analysis of Planck's papers on the blackbody radiation problem, Kuhn argues that Planck did not actually hold this concept until 1908, two years after it was first proposed by Einstein and Ehrenfest. The concept appears regularly in Planck's discussions after 1909. Although Kuhn's historiographical analysis is quite technical, it raises epistemological issues that illuminate the hermeneutical nature of scientific inquiry.

In the years preceding Planck's acceptance of the concept of energy quantization, Kuhn meticulously documents how Planck was still struggling to derive his radiation law from the principles of classical physics. Repeated attempts to reconcile the law with classical theory eventually led to a crisis that precipitated a conceptual change or gestalt switch. Kuhn argues that this conceptual change was accompanied by two alterations in Planck's technical vocabulary. First, Planck replaced the phrase "energy element" with the phrase "energy quantum." Whereas the first phrase refers to a mathematical subdivision of the classical energy continuum, the second phrase refers to a physically separable and indivisible atom or unit of energy. Second, Planck replaced the term "resonator" with the term "oscillator." Whereas the first term refers to hypothetical entities that absorb and emit energy to the electromagnetic medium in a continuous manner, the second term refers to hypothetical entities that absorb and emit energy in a discontinuous manner. Kuhn argues that this alteration in technical vocabulary is the central symptom of incommensurability. It signals a change in the meaning of the fundamental quantity of energy $h\nu$ from a mental subdivision of the energy continuum to a physically separable atom of energy. Consequently there are two incommensurable ways of understand-

³ See, e.g., Stephen T. Thornton and Andrew Rex, *Modern Physics for Scientists and Engineers*, 2nd ed. (Ft. Worth, TX: Brooks/Cole, 2002), 91–95.

⁴ See Thomas S. Kuhn, *Black-Body Theory and the Quantum Discontinuity, 1894–1912* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

ing the expression $E = h\nu$, where h is Planck's constant and ν is the frequency of oscillation.

Kuhn claims that Planck's conceptual change or gestalt switch is an example of a paradigm shift or scientific revolution. The most significant feature of such revolutions is that they remain invisible to both the discoverer and his or her colleagues during the period of discovery. As Kuhn argues, "creative scientists can be, and typically are, responsible for the emergence of beliefs that they did not hold themselves, at least not during the period when their discoveries were made."⁵ However, in reconstructing past discoveries, Kuhn argues that there is a tendency to disguise this fact by creating the impression that the discoverer had always held the belief, albeit unconsciously, or that he somehow knew the outcome of his scientific activity in advance of the discovery. We see this in the case of the blackbody radiation problem. It is curious, both from a historiographical and epistemological perspective, that the standard interpretation of this problem relies upon the term "oscillator," which Kuhn argues was only used by Planck after his gestalt switch in 1909. Planck's references to the term before this time occur only in relation to the use of the term by other physicists. Here Kuhn notes a resistance on the part of discoverers and the scientific community in accepting the mode of thought of a past generation of scientists after a discovery has revealed its failure to solve all its problems. After the concept of quantization had been discovered and the tradition of normal science was reformulated in terms of this new concept, physicists found it very difficult to return to the classical mode of understanding the problem of blackbody radiation.

The resistance to an older mode of understanding a problem after a scientific revolution has occurred is partly epistemological in origin. Scientists claim to hold their beliefs about nature upon strong evidence. The evidentialist model of scientific inquiry has become the gold standard against which every form of rational inquiry is measured. This ideal model of rationality is succinctly stated by W. K. Clifford when he writes that "it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence. If a man, holding a belief which he was taught in childhood or persuaded of afterwards, keeps down and pushes away any doubts which arise about it in his mind . . . the life of that man is one long sin against mankind."⁶ Thus the ideal model of rationality implies that the truly rational person is always critical. Such an ideal model of rational inquiry explains in part why the

⁵ Ibid., 362.

⁶ W. K. Clifford, *The Ethics of Belief and Other Essays* (New York: Prometheus, 1999), 77.

scientist is so resistant in accepting an older mode of thought. For in the transition to a new research paradigm, as Kuhn argues, new possibilities are opened at the expense of old ones, thereby "exposing the foundations of a previous life form as contingent and threatening the integrity of the life one had lived before. Ultimately the experience [of a scientific revolution] can be liberating, but it is always threatening."⁷

What is threatening, as Clifford suggests, is not whether an older mode of thought or belief turns out to be true or false but whether the scientist had a right to believe upon such evidence as was before him.⁸ The fact that an older mode of thought or belief turns out to be false after a discovery suggests that the scientist was not performing his duty in holding his scientific beliefs upon strong evidence. It is not so much that a scientific belief turns out to be false as that the scientist who holds the belief turns out to be irresponsible in adhering to the belief in light of accumulating evidence against it. Thus Kuhn is right when he characterizes the crisis that precipitates a scientific revolution as epistemological in nature. A detailed historiographical analysis of scientific discoveries reveals that the epistemological foundations of scientific belief do not measure up to the gold standard of rationality articulated by Clifford. In the practice of science the scientist is not, nor can she be, always critical. Kuhn argues that the reaction to such a revelation is a retreat to commitment in which the scientific community attempts to cover up the epistemological problem through the distortion of personal and communal memories.

Michael Polanyi compares the way one learns science to the way one learns an art. Like an art, science "can be transmitted only by examples of the practice which embodies it. He who would learn from a master by watching him must trust his example. He must recognize as *authoritative* the art which he wishes to learn and those of whom he would learn it. Unless he presumes that the substance and method of science are fundamentally sound, he will never develop a sense of scientific value and acquire the skill of scientific enquiry. This is the way of acquiring knowledge, which the Christian Church Fathers described as *fides quaerens intellectum*, 'to believe in order to know.'"⁹ Similarly, Kuhn suggests that one acquires a system of scientific belief in the same manner as one acquires a system of religious belief. In both cases, one must trust the authority of a tradition of rational inquiry. Just as one cannot become a Christian without trusting the veracity of the Christian tra-

⁷ Kuhn, *Black-Body Theory*, 368.

⁸ Clifford, *The Ethics of Belief*, 71.

⁹ Michael Polanyi, *Science, Faith and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 15. Italics mine.

dition, so one cannot become a scientist without trusting the veracity of the scientific tradition. Like the Christian tradition, the scientific tradition is initially exempt from skepticism. Kuhn argues that this is precisely what characterizes a tradition as "normal." In theology and in science a normal tradition provides norms or standards of rational inquiry. Like the believer, the scientist must trust the rational norms embodied in the exemplars of the scientific tradition as a reliable foundation for further scientific inquiry, not as a more or less arbitrary and doubtful point of departure.

However, it would be a mistake to suppose that the acquisition of a system of scientific belief or religious belief occurred in a critical manner. Like theology, science involves training in a normal paradigm. By trusting the paradigm of normal science, Kuhn argues that one learns to see the same things as his predecessors when confronted by the same stimuli. The child or novice is shown examples of situations that his predecessors have already learned to see as like each other and as different from other sorts of situations.¹⁰ In this way the young scientist learns to see a network of connections or patterns. Similarly, N. R. Hanson argues that the scientist is taught to see the world in a different way from the nonscientist. When a child or novice sees an X-ray tube, he does not see the same thing as the physicist. As Hanson argues, "the infant and the layman can see: they are not blind. But they cannot see what the physicist sees; they are blind to what he sees. . . . The elements of the [layman's] visual field, though identical with those of the physicist, are not organized for him as for the physicist; the same lines, colours, shapes are apprehended by both, but not in the same way."¹¹ According to the ideal model of scientific inquiry, what the scientist sees or observes is the result of learning how to interpret a common visual experience or sense datum shared by other scientists. Hanson, himself a research physicist trained in the techniques of scientific observation, argues to the contrary that what the physicist sees is the result of learning how to react to examples in the same way as other physicists. Whereas "interpretation" involves thinking or reasoning, "seeing" involves a spontaneous or involuntary reaction.¹² Thus, whereas interpretation refers to a critical process, seeing refers to a primitive reaction. In learning how to react to problem situations in the same way, Hanson argues that one acquires a way of seeing or organizing objects. But we do not see the "organization" of an object, say, a drawing, in the way

¹⁰ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 193-94.

¹¹ N. R. Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 17.

¹² *Ibid.*, 10-11.

we see the lines, shapes, and colors that comprise the drawing. For the organization itself is not a line, shape, or color. Unlike the elements of organization, the organization of the elements is not an element in the visual field. Thus Hanson argues that "the plot is not another detail in the story. Nor is the tune just one more note. Yet without plots and tunes details and notes would not hang together."¹³ Like the plot in relation to the details of a story, the tune in relation to the notes of a musical piece, or the meaning of a proposition in relation to its elements, the organization of elements in the visual field cannot be expressed by a detail, note, or symbol. Rather, the organization shows itself.

Therefore, contrary to the sense datum or empiricist account of observation, Hanson argues that the physicist must be taught or trained how to see elements in the visual field in a certain organization, pattern, or arrangement. However, what she sees or observes is not determined by the underlying psychological processes of interpretation, but by an objective context supplied by a normal paradigm. This organization is acquired by learning how to "react" to the paradigm rather than "interpret" it. The ability to interpret the organization embodied in the paradigm, to see alternative ways of organizing the common elements of the paradigm, occurs only after the physicist has acquired a way of seeing the world through the paradigm. As Hanson argues, theories and interpretations are there in the seeing from the outset.¹⁴ But the scientist learns how to see an arrangement of objects or phenomena according to a scientific interpretation before he realizes that it is an interpretation.

In drawing a similar distinction, Kuhn opposes "the attempt, traditional since Descartes but not before, to analyze perception as an interpretive process, as an unconscious version of what we do after we have perceived."¹⁵ But when we confuse the fundamental act of learning how to see nature in a certain pattern or organization with an interpretive process, we obscure the primitive nature of trusting the authority and veracity of the scientific tradition. According to the ideal model of scientific inquiry, the scientist acquires rules or conventions and the ability to apply them from exemplars in a critical manner. On the contrary, as Kuhn argues:

That description is tempting because our seeing a situation as like ones we have encountered before must be the result of neural processing . . . once we

¹³ Ibid., 13.

¹⁴ Ibid., 10.

¹⁵ Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 195.

have learned to do it, recognition of similarity must be as fully systematic as the beating of our hearts. But that very parallel suggests that recognition may also be involuntary [spontaneous], a process over which we have no control. If it is, then we may not properly conceive it as something we manage by applying rules and criteria. To speak of it in those terms implies that we have access to alternatives, that we might, for example, have disobeyed a rule, or misapplied a criterion, or experimented with some other way of seeing. Those, I take it, are just the sort of things we cannot do.¹⁶

Thus, contrary to the evidentialist model of scientific inquiry, Kuhn argues that a normal paradigm organizes our perception and experience of the world before we are critical. It not only provides the condition for seeing; it determines what we *can* see. Alternative ways of organizing our perception and experience of the world are excluded by the very nature of a normal paradigm that constitutes a shared worldview, inescapable framework, or form of life. Like the certainty characteristic of a religious form of life, the certainty characteristic of a normal paradigm in science is not a characteristic of scientific belief itself, but of learning how to react to examples in the same way as other scientists who share the paradigm. Thus Kuhn argues that a second source of resistance to alternative paradigms or modes of thought "is the *assurance* that the older [normal] paradigm will ultimately solve all its problems, that nature can be shoved into the box the paradigm provides. . . . That same assurance is what makes normal or puzzle-solving science possible."¹⁷ Hence, despite mounting counterevidence, Planck struggles to reconcile his radiation law with the normal paradigm of classical physics with certainty. His effort is rewarded by solving the puzzle of the ultraviolet catastrophe with an empirical formula of unprecedented accuracy.

At some point, however, the normal paradigm is unable to solve all its problems and we are led to a critical examination of the paradigm. At the same time, Kuhn argues that there is a tendency to adhere to the normal paradigm despite accumulating doubts, anomalies, and counterevidence. Thus a third source of resistance to alternative modes of thought is ideology.¹⁸ In contrast to the spontaneous or involuntary manner in which a normal paradigm is acquired, ideology arises from the conscious and willful resistance to change the normal paradigm regardless of facts. W. W. Bartley has characterized this resistance to alternative modes of thought as the morbidity or decay of critical belief. As Bartley explains, the morbidity of critical belief "investigates what

¹⁶ Ibid., 194.

¹⁷ Ibid., 151–52. Italics mine.

¹⁸ Ibid., 138.

can happen to an objective system of belief to lead it, after being held for a time quite critically, to be gradually or abruptly, as the case may be, transformed into a dogmatically held ideology."¹⁹ If the morbidity of critical belief has to do with the will, as Bartley suggests, then we bear responsibility for the decay of critical belief. As Clifford argues, the sacred tradition of humanity does not consist "in propositions or statements which are to be accepted and believed on the authority of the tradition, but in questions rightly asked, in conceptions which enable us to ask further questions, and in methods of answering questions. The value of all these things depends on their being tested day by day. The very sacredness of the precious deposit imposes upon us the duty and the responsibility of testing it, of purifying and enlarging it to the utmost of our powers."²⁰

Ideology, then, is to reason what the natural process of decay is to the body. Moreover, ideology is to scientific belief what fideism is to religious belief. In order to prevent the decay of critical belief in both cases we must test and scrutinize the normal paradigm. But, as Kuhn argues, we cannot always be critical according to the ideal model of scientific inquiry articulated by Clifford. Rather, critical belief occurs at special moments when the normal paradigm is threatened by the accumulation of evidence against it. Contrary to Karl Popper, who maintains that the scientist must always be critical, Kuhn argues that such moments are in fact rare. Scientific activity is largely occupied with working out the details and consequences of a normal paradigm. We see this near the end of the nineteenth century during the discovery of X-rays, radioactivity, the electron, and the Zeeman effect. In large part, scientists were busy measuring physical parameters such as specific heats, densities, compressibility, resistivity, indices of refraction, and permeabilities.²¹ Only a relatively small group of scientists were concerned with the anomalies presented by the new and often unexpected discoveries.

More fundamental, Kuhn claims that we cannot just break out of a normal paradigm or framework at any time.²² Scientific revolutions, which consist of fundamental changes in the organization of our perception and experience of the world, occur through crisis. So long as the normal paradigm is able to solve all its problems, the possibility of

¹⁹ W. W. Bartley III, *The Retreat to Commitment*, 2nd ed. (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1984), xix.

²⁰ Clifford, *The Ethics of Belief*, 91.

²¹ Thornton and Rex, *Modern Physics for Scientists*, 16.

²² Thomas S. Kuhn, "Reflections on My Critics," in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 232.

extraordinary science cannot occur. The crisis that gradually emerged as a result of Planck's inability to reconcile his radiation law with the normal paradigm of classical physics prepared the way for a scientific revolution. Before Planck could see the alternative paradigm of a discrete energy spectrum, he had to despair of his inability to explain blackbody radiation in terms of the normal paradigm of a continuous energy spectrum. Just as the religious believer must fully acknowledge his inability to overcome his situatedness in error before he can see the point of grace, the scientist must fully acknowledge his inability to overcome the problems of a normal paradigm before he can see the point of an alternative paradigm.

Although the process leading to a scientific revolution is gradual, Kuhn argues that the revolution itself is sudden, like a religious conversion experience. Like Kuhn, Hanson claims that such a revolution is not the result of deliberation and interpretation, but the result of an abrupt change in the conceptual organization of what one sees.²³ Just as there is a discontinuity or breach between natural consciousness and Christian consciousness, so there is a discontinuity between an older scientific paradigm and a new one. Like the religious believer, the scientist must change his mode of thought or reflection. As new evidence comes to light, the context of a problem situation changes. Kuhn suggests that it is this context, rather than a mysterious intuition, that is responsible for the sudden reorganization of the familiar elements of the old paradigm into a new pattern. At some unexpected moment, the new pattern emerges like a hidden figure in a picture puzzle. Following Hanson, Kuhn describes this psychological experience as a gestalt switch.

THE HERMENEUTICAL DIMENSION OF SCIENCE

Kuhn's historiographical arguments reflect a paradigm change in the image of science as revolutionary as the paradigm changes he describes in science. Based upon historiographical analysis of several scientific discoveries such as the blackbody radiation theory, Kuhn develops a postfoundationalist theory of scientific progress or discovery that has largely replaced the modern image of science as a steady, accumulative, and linear march toward truth. As we have seen, this new image of science is very similar to theological inquiry. We inherit a system of scientific belief that functions as a normal paradigm in providing a nonarbitrary and reliable point of departure for further scientific in-

²³ Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery*, 12.

quiry. This system of belief is initially exempt from skepticism, which is what characterizes it as normal. Contrary to the ideal model of scientific inquiry, which claims that the scientist is always critical in relation to the scientific tradition, Kuhn argues that the scientist reacts in accordance with the normal paradigm so long as it is able to solve its problems. However, when accumulating doubts, anomalies, and counterevidence arise in relation to a problem that the normal paradigm cannot solve, a crisis emerges. This crisis elicits critical belief or extraordinary science that pressures us to examine the normal paradigm, propose alternative versions of the solution of a problem within the paradigm, and ultimately to modify or change the normal paradigm by adopting an alternative paradigm. The new paradigm then functions in a normal role in determining further scientific inquiry.

Thus the structure of scientific revolutions consists in the interdependent relation between normal science and extraordinary science, in the interplay between the established scientific tradition and the critical examination and interpretation of that tradition. For this reason, Richard J. Bernstein argues that Kuhn's structure of scientific revolutions intimates the hermeneutical circle of tradition and interpretation.²⁴ As the normal paradigm of traditional science is examined and interpreted as a result of crisis, it is purified and enlarged through the critical activity of extraordinary science in the manner suggested by Clifford. Just as there can be no extraordinary science and scientific progress without a normal paradigm, extraordinary science or critical belief is necessary to keep the normal paradigm from decaying into a dogmatically held ideology. Normal science and extraordinary science form interdependent parts of a conceptual and rational whole that mutually determine each other. Thus, in the words of Alasdair MacIntyre, the normal paradigm of science is at once tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive.²⁵ It is constituted by the scientific interpretations of the past, which are also constitutive of the scientific interpretations of the present.

However, while the structure of scientific revolutions may intimate the hermeneutical circle, Kuhn never develops this structure into a hermeneutical model of paradigm interaction, largely because of his metaphor of conceptual schemes. Although Kuhn rightly rejects the possibility of a neutral translation language, which could provide a way of comparing incommensurable paradigms from a more objective perspective that

²⁴ Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 131–33.

²⁵ See Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

stands outside all paradigms, he nevertheless argues that we must find a way to translate one paradigm into the language of another. Here, as Donald Davidson argues, Kuhn's metaphor of different observers of the same world who come to it with incommensurable systems of concepts leads to the idea of conceptual schemes and ultimately to conceptual relativism.²⁶ Although Bernstein is right in suggesting that Kuhn never intended his criticism of objectivism to lead to relativism, Davidson's conclusion is valid. Given the sharp contrast Kuhn draws between subject and object, between the organizing system of a conceptual scheme and the neutral empirical content supplied by nature waiting to be organized, it is difficult to see how scientists living in dramatically different worlds can understand one another without a common coordinate system such as a neutral translation language. Thus, contrary to Bernstein, the very idea of a conceptual scheme is incompatible with the hermeneutical circle of tradition and interpretation.

Davidson urges that we must abandon the idea of conceptual schemes as distortive of the actual practice of scientific inquiry. In place of the metaphor of conceptual schemes, we ought to adopt the metaphor of a system of belief in which the scientific interpretations of the past and present mutually determine each other. This suggests that we ought to replace the phrase "conceptual *translation* between paradigms" with the phrase "hermeneutical *interaction* between paradigms." But this alteration in vocabulary signals a conceptual change analogous to the one Kuhn discusses in relation to the blackbody radiation problem. Therefore, just as it is a mistake to suppose that Planck held the concept of a discrete energy spectrum during the period of his discovery, so it is a mistake to suppose that Kuhn held the concept of the hermeneutical circle during the period of his discovery.

The problem of conceptual relativism raised by Kuhn's metaphor of conceptual schemes can be illuminated in relation to the morbidity of critical belief. In the absence of critical belief a system of belief tends to decay and ultimately petrify. Wilhelm Dilthey argues that the morbidity of critical belief is related to the need in human psychology to establish a single interpretation as universally valid. When the critical activity characteristic of rational inquiry is suppressed, the unity and integrity of the common experience given to us in a normal paradigm is fractured into conflicting worldviews or metaphysical systems, each claiming to be a universally valid interpretation of our common experience. The source of the fracturing is rooted in different reactions

²⁶ Donald Davidson, "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), 187.

to life and their attitudes of alienation rather than in conflicting systems of belief.²⁷ Thus, contrary to Kuhn, Dilthey suggests that the fracturing of a normal paradigm into conflicting interpretations or solutions of a problem due to crisis is rooted in different reactions rather than in incommensurable conceptual schemes or interpretations. This in turn suggests that the problem of incommensurability lies in our being closed rather than open to alternative interpretations. Therefore, Kuhn could avoid the charge of conceptual relativism simply by locating the source of incommensurability in the lack of receptivity of the will rather than in dramatically different conceptual schemes or conflicting interpretations.

In fact, this change would not only be more consistent with the hermeneutical circle, but with Kuhn's own recognition of the spontaneous manner in which scientific knowledge is acquired by reacting to a normal paradigm. In particular, the change is consistent with Kuhn's parallel between a scientific revolution and religious conversion experience. For this parallel implies two things. First, there can be no direct transition from the normal paradigm of a continuous energy spectrum to the extraordinary paradigm of a discrete energy spectrum, any more than there can be a direct transition from the normal paradigm of knowing about Christ to the extraordinary paradigm of accepting the things of Christ crucified through faith. In both cases, there is no neutral translation language independent of either paradigm that could make such a transition possible. Thus, contrary to Popper, Kuhn argues that a neutral observation language is impossible because words change their meaning from one paradigm to the next. In the transition from one paradigm to another, words attach themselves to nature in different ways. Second, the problem of reorganizing one's perception and experience of the world has to do with the will as much as it has to do with a new way of seeing the world or a problem. Although the scientist acquires an organized way of seeing the world through a normal paradigm in a manner that is independent of the will, the resistance to alternative ways of seeing the world is a difficulty having to do with the will rather than the intellect. Before one's perception and experience of the world can be reorganized, the will must be reoriented as a result of crisis. The crisis that gradually emerges as a result of the inability of the normal paradigm to explain a problem makes the will more malleable, open, and receptive to alternative paradigms. Similarly, according to the Christian tradition, the will must be con-

²⁷ Wilhelm Dilthey, "The Types of World-View and Their Development in the Metaphysical Systems," in *W. Dilthey: Selected Writings*, ed. H. P. Rickman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 133–54.

verted through crisis or sufferings before one can see the world differently through the eyes of faith.

Moreover, according to the hermeneutical circle, we do not have to break out of a normal paradigm “before” we can understand an alternative paradigm as Kuhn’s translation requirement implies. The prejudices inherited from a normal paradigm are not only obstacles to understanding alternative paradigms, but the conditions of understanding them. As Bernstein argues, “it is true, of course, that understanding requires effort and care, imagination and perceptiveness, but this is directed to the *pathos* of opening ourselves to what we seek to understand—of allowing it to ‘speak to us.’ And such receptiveness is possible only by virtue of those ‘justified prejudices’ that open us to experience.”²⁸

Kuhn argues that the crisis that emerges from the inability of the normal paradigm to solve all its problems leads to a breakdown of the normal paradigm. Because neither problems nor puzzles often yield to the first attack, the proliferation of versions of a theory within the normal paradigm is a very usual symptom of crisis.²⁹ However, while scientists may begin to lose faith and then consider alternatives, they do not renounce the normal paradigm that has led them into crisis.³⁰ This suggests that scientific interpretations are justified or validated, not by appealing to the empiricist concept of self-evidence, but by appealing to the other interpretations or parts of a normal scientific tradition that arise in the fracturing of the normal paradigm. Like theological interpretations, scientific interpretations are justified in the practice of working out alternative interpretations of a problem within the hermeneutical circle of tradition and interpretation. Like the rule of faith, in which one part of Scripture is illuminated by its other parts, a scientific problem is illuminated by alternative interpretations of the problem within the normal paradigm. Thus Kuhn argues that crisis loosens the rules of normal puzzle solving in ways that ultimately permit a new paradigm to emerge by proliferating versions or alternative interpretations of the normal paradigm.³¹

More fundamental, crisis loosens the grip of the normal paradigm on the will by opening it to new possibilities. As Bernstein suggests, through crisis the emergence of critical belief opens us “to the ‘newness’ of what is handed down to us, through the play of our forestructures [normal paradigm] and the ‘things themselves’ [problems] we

²⁸ Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 137.

²⁹ Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 71, 75.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

can become aware of those prejudices that blind us to the meaning and truth of what we are trying to understand and those prejudices that enable us to understand."³² Critical belief allows us to distinguish between prejudices that enable us to understand a problem and prejudices that present obstacles to understanding. In view of alternative interpretations of a problem within the normal paradigm we must decide which parts of the paradigm to preserve and which parts to change. Thus Kuhn argues that a fundamental source of scientific change is "the divergent nature of the numerous partial solutions that concentrated attention to the problem has made available."³³ Consequently the interdependent (and highly suggestive hermeneutical) relation between normal science and extraordinary science constitutes an essential tension necessary for the growth of scientific knowledge.

THE BLURRING OF THE SUBJECT-OBJECT SCHEME

The transition from an evidentialist model of scientific inquiry to a hermeneutical model is suggested not only by historiographical analysis but by the development of quantum physics. Both have significantly changed the image of science. As Stephen Toulmin writes, "on the minutest level of scientific analysis, Laplace's ideal of the scientist, as 'an unobserved, uninfluencing observer' studying the world of nature through a one-way mirror, is unattainable in principle for reasons of basic physical theory. There can be no simple, one-way coupling between a physicist and (say) the electrons that he selects as his objects of study. However delicate and miniscule our acts of observation on any subatomic particle may be, they will alter the particle's existing position or momentum, and so limit the precision with which its current condition can be known."³⁴ When we observe objects on the microscopic scale, we find that the observer and the observed are interdependent parts of the same system. Like Kuhn's historiographical analysis, the development of quantum theory raises epistemological issues that illuminate the hermeneutical nature of scientific inquiry. In particular, it leads us to question the sharp contrast between subject and object drawn by modern philosophy that Kuhn appears to accept. This problem, known as the observational problem, is of great concern to physicists. Einstein and Bohr discussed the problem at great length. In recounting these discussions, Bohr argues that they implied the "im-

³² Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 138.

³³ Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 83.

³⁴ Stephen Toulmin, *The Return to Cosmology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 249–50.

possibility of any sharp separation between the behavior of atomic objects and the interaction with the measuring instruments which serve to define the conditions under which the phenomena appear."³⁵

The observational problem is illuminated by the uncertainty principle first enunciated in 1927 by the German physicist Werner Heisenberg. The first form of the principle tells us that no matter how good an experimental measurement is made there is uncertainty in knowing either the particle's momentum or position at the same time. In fact, the more precisely we measure the particle's momentum, the larger the uncertainty we must accept in knowing the particle's position, and vice versa. Similarly, the second form of the principle tells us that no matter how good an experimental measurement is made there is also uncertainty in knowing either the particle's energy at a given position or when the particle is located at this position. In fact, the more precisely we measure the particle's energy at a given position, the larger the uncertainty we must accept as to when the particle is located at this position, and vice versa. However, because the value $\hbar = h/2\pi$ is very small, the uncertainty principle is evident only on the atomic level.³⁶

A measuring instrument such as an electron microscope emits high-frequency radiation when it measures some property of a particle, say, the position of an electron. This radiation is emitted in quantized packets of energy called photons. Because particles of matter interact with photons, when we try to locate or localize the position of an electron precisely in a limited space-time (xt) domain, Bohr argues that the uncertainty principle implies that there is an exchange of momentum and energy between the measuring instrument and the electron. As can be seen from an examination of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle in either of its forms, the smaller the domain chosen, the greater the exchange of momentum and energy.³⁷ When a photon collides with an electron, the photon transfers momentum and energy to the electron. According to the conservation of momentum and energy, the total momentum and energy of the photon-electron system before the collision must be identical with the total momentum and energy of the system after the collision. This transfer of momentum and energy to the electron influences the very properties we wish to measure. Thus, when we shine a source of light or radiation on an atomic object in order to measure its position, the measuring instrument introduces uncertainty

³⁵ Niels Bohr, *Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge* (New York: Science Editions, 1958), 39–40.

³⁶ Thornton and Rex, *Modern Physics for Scientists*, 177–79.

³⁷ Bohr, *Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge*, 89.

into the measurement of the particle's momentum as a result of the beam of photons emitted by the instrument.

Since electronic measuring instruments are extensions of our unaided observational abilities, it follows that the very act of observation or perception influences what is observed, though the influence is evident only on the atomic level. Thus Bohr argues that the uncertainty principle illuminates a fundamental limitation in the scope of the normal paradigm of classical physics:

While, within the frame of classical physics, there is no difference in principle between the description of the measuring instruments and the objects under investigation, the situation is essentially different when we study quantum phenomena, since the quantum of action imposes restrictions on the description of the state of the systems by means of space-time coordinates and momentum-energy quantities. Since the deterministic description of classical physics rests on the assumption of an unrestricted compatibility of space-time coordination and the dynamical conservation laws, we are obviously confronted here with the problem of whether, as regards atomic objects, such a description can be fully retained.³⁸

Although we can clearly distinguish between the observer and the object of study within the normal paradigm of classical physics, the uncertainty principle implies the impossibility of a sharp separation between the behavior of atomic objects and the act of observing these objects through measuring instruments. On the atomic level there is no sharp distinction between subject and object. Consequently Toulmin argues that we can no longer regard the world simply as a view because we are agents or participants in all that we observe.³⁹ The observer and the observed are interdependent parts of the same quantum system. The quantum mechanical approach to nature reveals different aspects of an atomic object that cannot be observed together. Similarly, the normal paradigm of classical physics and the extraordinary paradigm of quantum physics reveal different aspects of nature that cannot be described together, such as the wave and particle nature of both matter and radiation. Bohr relates these different aspects of phenomena with his principle of complementarity. Because the uncertainty principle forbids the observation of both aspects of an atomic object together, we must view them as complementary parts of the whole we are trying to understand.

However, in the limit where classical physics and quantum physics should agree—when the orbit of the electron is large or, equivalently,

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Toulmin, *The Return to Cosmology*, 238.

when the principal quantum number is large—the results of quantum physics must reduce to the results of classical physics. Bohr calls this requirement the correspondence principle. For example, the frequencies of radiated energy predicted by quantum physics must agree with the frequencies predicted by classical physics for large values of an electron's orbit where quantization effects are minimized.⁴⁰ In order to maintain this equivalence, Planck's constant h must decrease as the electron's orbit increases. Thus, in the limit when the principal quantum number is large, where quantization effects are minimized, the finite size of Planck's constant is unimportant. Similarly, when the velocity of an object is a significant fraction of the speed of light ($v \leq 0.14c$) or, equivalently, when the kinetic energy of the object is significantly smaller than its rest energy ($K \ll E_0 = mc^2$), where relativistic effects are minimized, the results of special relativity should reduce to the results of classical physics. We see, therefore, that Planck's constant plays a role in quantum theory analogous to that of the speed of light in Einstein's theory of special relativity. In both cases, h and c define the correspondence of modern physics and classical physics, that is, the limiting conditions under which the results of quantum theory and special relativity should reduce to the results of classical physics. Thus we can translate the results of quantum physics into classical physics, or the results of special relativity into classical physics, in the limits where they should reduce to the same physical description of nature.

However, contrary to Kuhn, Bohr argues that we cannot translate the whole of one paradigm into the language of another. Rather, as Einstein and Infeld's metaphor of scientific discovery suggests, each paradigm discloses a complementary aspect or description of nature that yields a wider conception of nature as a whole. Like the rationalists of the Enlightenment, Bohr was convinced that the symmetry he observed in nature must also be reflected in our common experience. Consequently Bohr did not hesitate to extend his principle of complementarity to observational problems outside physics:

When studying human cultures different from our own, we have to deal with a particular problem of observation which on closer consideration shows many features in common with atomic or psychological problems, where the interaction between objects and measuring tools, or the inseparability of objective content and observing subject, prevents an immediate application of the conventions suited to accounting for experiences of daily life. Especially in the study of cultures of primitive peoples, ethnologists not only are, indeed, aware of the risk of corrupting such cultures by the necessary contact, but are even

⁴⁰ For the physics of this claim, see Thornton and Rex, *Modern Physics for Scientists*, 132–38.

confronted with the problem of the reaction of such studies on their own human attitude. What I here allude to is the experience, well known to explorers, of the shaking of their hitherto *unrealized prejudices* through the experience of the unsuspected inner harmony human life can present even under conventions and traditions most radically different from their own.⁴¹

Like Dilthey, Bohr recognizes that the methodologies of the physical sciences and human studies must be appropriate to their disparate subject matters. Nevertheless, he argues that we can extract a general epistemological attitude or strategy from the lessons learned in the development of quantum theory. Just as the appearance of different physical phenomena discloses complementary aspects of nature, so different manifestations of mental life disclose complementary aspects of our common experience. More generally, just as different conceptual paradigms in physics are necessary to achieve a wider view of the physical world, so different human cultures or forms of life are necessary to achieve a wider view of our common human nature. Our prejudices and differences are not just obstacles to understanding alien cultures or alternative interpretations of our common experience within a particular culture. They are also the conditions of understanding. It is a matter of distinguishing between prejudices that enable understanding and prejudices that impede understanding. But we cannot make this distinction apart from a mutual interaction between alternative interpretations of a problem competing for our rational allegiance within a shared paradigm.

Of course Bohr does not intend to press the analogy between physical and human problems literally. Rather, he suggests a metaphor for understanding and approaching the problem of disagreement and conflict, whether in science, theology, or in interdisciplinary dialogue, that avoids the problems associated with Kuhn's metaphor of conceptual schemes. The prejudices or interpretations that the observer brings to a problem are at once conditions and obstacles to understanding the problem. Because the observer is an active agent or participant in what she is trying to understand, it is impossible to work out which prejudices enable understanding and which prejudices impede understanding apart from an open and lively interaction between alternative interpretations of a problem within a shared paradigm. Alternative interpretations or partial solutions of a problem within the normal paradigm are necessary to discover the scope and limitations of the established paradigm. They disclose complementary aspects of a problem that may lead to a wider view of the problem. As John E. Smith,

⁴¹ Bohr, *Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge*, 30. Italics mine.

Albert Einstein, and Leopold Infeld suggest, the older way of looking at the problem is still valid. Only now, after we have achieved a wider view of the problem by overcoming obstacles or prejudices that impede understanding, we see how this starting point is connected to a much richer environment. Moreover, as Bohr's correspondence principle suggests, regardless of how different alternative interpretations may be, they should reduce to a set of common beliefs or shared assumptions in the limit where one interpretation stands in an exclusive relationship of complementarity to another interpretation.

This implies a hermeneutical dimension of science analogous to that found in theology. Like theological inquiry, scientific inquiry depends upon the interdependent relation or hermeneutical interaction between the scientific interpretations of the past and present. If this is true, we cannot expect theological inquiry to do what scientific inquiry cannot, namely, to resolve disputes and justify truth claims from a perspective that stands outside a tradition of rational inquiry. The scientific ideal of the unobserved, uninfluencing observer is untenable on both philosophical and scientific grounds. Although there can be no perception of the whole without its parts, the meaning of the parts cannot be fully comprehended without relating them to the whole in a complementary manner. Whereas the former activity corresponds to the analytic function of reason, the latter activity corresponds to the synthetic function of reason. If, as John E. Smith argues, the limitations of a particular interpretation or abstraction can be seen only in relation to some wider purpose that takes more into account, science cannot exclude theology as a complementary interpretation of our common experience that may illuminate the limits of the much disputed sphere of natural science.

CONCLUSION

Tolstoy wrote that "by faith it appears that in order to understand the meaning of life I must renounce my reason, the very thing for which alone a meaning is required. A contradiction arose from which there are two exits. Either that which I called reason was not so rational as I supposed, or that which seemed to me irrational [faith] was not so irrational as I supposed."⁴² Perhaps the claims of science are not so rational as modernity has supposed and the claims of theology are not so irrational as Enlightenment critiques of the reasonableness of religious belief have supposed. The hermeneutical or interactionist struc-

⁴² Leo N. Tolstoy, *The Portable Tolstoy*, ed. John Bayley (New York: Penguin, 1978), 702.

ture of rational inquiry, both in science and in theology, raises the question of whether the conflict between the two disciplines is as sharp as it first appears. As Dilthey suggests, the roots of the conflict between science and theology as metaphysical systems appear to be volitional rather than rational or epistemological in origin.

Indeed, recent discoveries in cosmology suggest that science and theology deeply correspond in the limit where science stands in an exclusive relationship of complementarity to theology. This convergence marks the beginning of the reversal of the despiritualization of nature begun in the modern period after Newton. When one examines the rapid evolution of the universe from an infinite singularity into a richly diverse environment suitable for human life, one can no longer "see" the universe simply as a sequence of efficient causality. Like Hanson and Kuhn's analysis of scientific observation, the accumulation of scientific evidence has changed the context of our way of looking at the universe. The very organization of elements in the universe shows a purposeful design. As E. A. Burttt argues, "if one admits that there is such a thing as value in the universe at all, he finds it very difficult to construe it without giving a place to teleology."⁴³ Although value is not an element in the universe like hydrogen or helium, it manifests itself in the organization of these elements in a way that rapidly leads to the flourishing of human life. Ludwig Wittgenstein suggests that value is analogous to the meaning or sense of a proposition. Although meaning is not an element of a proposition, it shows itself in the structure or organization of elements in the proposition. Similarly, although value is not an element or brute fact of the universe, it shows itself in the structure or organization of elements in the universe. Thus, while we can no longer view human life as the physical or spatial center of the universe as in medieval cosmology, modern cosmology and the Christian tradition are in agreement that human life still constitutes the teleological center of the creation event.⁴⁴ Once again, we may view an explanation in terms of the relation of things to human purpose as being just as real and valid as an explanation in terms of efficient causality that expresses the relation of things to each other.

There is no "scientific" reason to maintain the dichotomy between the causal view of the universe in modern physics and the teleological view of the universe in the theological tradition. In fact, they are interdependent. Classical mechanics seeks to explain the causal mecha-

⁴³ E. A. Burttt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*, rev. ed. (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1952), 309.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., Gerald L. Schroeder, *The Science of God: The Convergence of Scientific and Biblical Wisdom* (New York: Broadway, 1997).

nism of physical events in a universe that very much has a goal or directedness. This can be seen in the transition from Newtonian mechanics, in which the net force on a body is calculated by adding up all the individual forces acting on it, to Lagrangian and Hamiltonian dynamics that arrive at the same result using energy methods. Hamilton's principle, which states that the actual path along which a dynamical system moves is that which minimizes the time integral of the difference between the kinetic and potential energies, is influenced by Maupertuis's principle of least action. This principle in turn is based upon the theological concept that action is minimized through the wisdom of God.⁴⁵ As Stephen Thornton and Jerry Marion explain, "in the Newtonian formulation, a certain force on a body produces a definite motion—that is, we always associate a definite *effect* with a certain *cause*. According to Hamilton's Principle, however, the motion of a body results from the attempt of nature to achieve a certain *purpose*, namely, to minimize the time integral of the difference between the kinetic and potential energies."⁴⁶ On the macroscopic scale, then, nature is designed in such a way that it tends toward the goal of minimized action. But we also see this tendency on the microscopic scale. In quantum mechanics an atomic system seeks to be in the lowest or most stable energy state possible. Thus in physical science the causal view and the teleological view do not represent incommensurable perspectives, but complementary modes of understanding dynamical systems that yield a wider view of how nature works.

Similarly, science and theology do not represent incommensurable systems of belief—one causal and the other teleological, one more rational and the other less rational. Rather, they offer complementary interpretations of the manifold dimensions of our common experience shaped by two different normal paradigms or traditions of rational inquiry, which correspond in the limit where the scientific (causal) interpretation reduces to the theological (teleological) interpretation in illuminating our central place in the scheme of things. If this is true, theology cannot be naturalized. The attempt to replace theological explanations with scientific ones in a theory of everything is impossible given the diverse manifestations and activities of mental life. Science cannot replace theology as the ultimate explanation of our place in the universe based upon a narrow conception of reason that not even physical science can satisfy. For our common experience of the world as an evolving system with a transcendent character in which human

⁴⁵ Stephen T. Thornton and Jerry B. Marion, *Classical Dynamics of Particles and Systems*, 5th ed. (Ft. Worth, TX: Brooks/Cole, 2004), 230.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 258.

destiny is central is shaped as much by theology as it is by modern science. The proliferation of versions of a theory within modern cosmology intended to replace the theological explanation of the transcendent character of the universe with a naturalistic explanation, whether through the postulation of a quantum fluctuation or parallel universes, only underscores the paradox of a beginning, of an infinite singularity where the known laws of physics break down. This may be the symptom of crisis which leads scientists to open their minds to the respiritualization of nature. Given the failure of modern physics to explain a world without a creator, physical science may be progressing toward a wider view of the manifold dimensions of our common experience in which theology is seen as just as fundamental as science in understanding human origins and the fate of our species.

Review Article

American Dispensationalism's Perpetually Imminent End Times*

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In the early days of 2006, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon suffered a massive stroke, effectively ending his political leadership and imperiling his life. Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad responded by communicating his ill wishes for Sharon, saying that he hoped the man he regarded as a criminal would soon die. Perhaps just as predictably, Pat Robertson weighed in, indicating that Sharon's stroke was divine punishment for the prime minister's sin of "dividing God's land" by pulling Israeli settlements out of Gaza. But in the strange world of dispensationalist prophecy belief inhabited by most Fundamentalists and Pentecostals, such seemingly bad news as Sharon's illness is, in fact, good news. The Rapture Index (at <http://www.raptureready.com>), touted as the "the prophetic speedometer of end-time activity," moved up three points in its weekly score on January 9, including one point for the "political vacuum" created in Israel. At 154, this index of forty-five global factors—economic, political, apocalyptic, meteorological, and so forth—is comfortably beyond the range of "heavy prophetic activity" and well into the red-alert category of "fasten your seat belts." In other words, the signs of the times suggest the rapture may be near at hand.

Since its introduction into the United States by John Nelson Darby in the mid-nineteenth century, dispensationalism has gained adherents among the most conservative Protestants, those on the right wing of evangelicalism who came to be called Fundamentalists and Pentecostals. Dispensationalism is a refined system of biblical interpretation that

* Glenn W. Shuck, *Marks of the Beast: The Left Behind Novels and the Struggle for Evangelical Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 273 pp., \$20.00; Amy Johnson Frykholm, *Rapture Culture: Left Behind in Evangelical America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 224 pp., \$35.00; Barbara R. Rossing, *The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2004), 212 pp., \$24.00; Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 336 pp., \$24.99.

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divides sacred history into several (usually seven) dispensations, eras during which God relates to his covenant people in distinct ways. Most dispensationalists suggest we are currently in the “church age,” the sixth epoch, which will give way to the culminating “kingdom age,” or the millennium of peace and righteousness promised in Revelation. This transition will be wrought by a series of events that dispensationalists believe are elaborated in very specific detail in prophetic scriptures from the Old and New Testaments: the rapture, in which Christ will come to whisk away faithful Christians to the heavenly realm; the tribulation, a seven-year period of immense suffering through plagues, earthquakes, and various other expressions of divine wrath, during which Antichrist comes to rule the world; the battle of Armageddon at the end of the seven years, when Christ returns to defeat Antichrist; and finally the millennium, when returned Christians rule with Christ.

Fundamentalists and Pentecostals pay close attention to events in the Middle East because Israel plays a vital role in the dispensationalist scheme. Whereas most Christians historically have understood Jesus as Messiah to be the fulfillment of the law and the church to be the new Israel, the covenant people of God, dispensationalists claim that God’s covenantal relationship with Israel remains unchanged. When most Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah, however, history entered a long parenthesis—the church age—that will close with the end-times events. Necessary to that process is a reconstituted Israel and a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, where Jews who finally embrace Christ will conduct ritual sacrifices according to biblical mandate, which in no way has been abrogated. Not surprisingly, these are controversial claims, rejected by the great majority of Christians, including many evangelicals, to say nothing of Jews, who find them bizarre and offensive. Yet among Fundamentalists and Pentecostals, dispensational premillennialism is the principal eschatological framework.

Events since the mid-twentieth century have heightened the intense eschatological preoccupation of dispensationalists. The establishment of statehood for Israel in 1948 and the expansion of its borders through the Six Days’ War of 1967 gave enormous impetus to those engrossed in reading the signs of the times. Additionally, the increased political and social engagement of conservative Protestants since the 1970s—and the animating sense of fighting a culture war—has emboldened dispensationalists and drawn adherents. Today one can find proponents like Robertson and Jack and Rexella Van Impe offering dire predictions on slickly produced television shows, bookstores stocked with volumes that show how the latest geopolitical crisis was predicted in the pages of Ezekiel or Revelation, and innumerable Web

sites handicapping the end times and offering a dispensationalist reading on the daily news. Prophecy fiction, in particular, has been a successful medium for dispensationalists, from Hal Lindsey's 1970 best seller, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, to Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins's twelve-volume Left Behind series (1995–2004). The huge popularity of the latter, with tens of millions of copies sold and several ongoing spin-off series, has garnered the attention of cultural critics and educated elites, most of whom no doubt would prefer to ignore dispensationalism or dismiss it as a foul odor emanating from the stagnant backwaters of American culture. Yet combined with the conservative turn in American politics and society and the war on terrorism following 9/11, it has taken on a more menacing scent, one that requires serious reckoning.

Each of the books under review attempts to make sense of the Left Behind phenomenon or the larger dispensationalist milieu that gave rise to it. Glenn W. Shuck's *Marks of the Beast* provides an erudite reading of the novels through the lens of cultural theory. He elucidates the concept of "network culture," as delineated by Mark C. Taylor and other theorists, and posits that dispensationalists are being "left behind" in the decentralized, image-based, individualistic, and consumerist world of networks. In this postmodern context of variability and constant information flows, the absolutist beliefs of dispensationalists are an anachronism, an untenable insistence upon stability and certainty in an environment that undercuts all such pretensions. By reading the novels in presentist terms, Shuck essentially equates the "beast system" that dispensationalists believe will arise during the tribulation to oppress Christians and other opponents of Antichrist with network culture. In other words, through futurist fiction, built on their futurist understanding of biblical prophecy read with a literalist hermeneutic, dispensationalists are decrying and attempting to negotiate our fluid postmodern world. Shuck's approach provides many telling insights into the anxieties and fears that fuel dispensationalists' apocalyptic visions. He is at his best in exploring the existential dilemmas that bedevil prophecy believers; the world has moved far away from their "old-time gospel," and Satan and his minions appear to be more and more in control. Dispensationalists' troubling yearning for bad news—calamities, wars, natural disasters—which confirms the nearness of the rapture and their almost gleeful lust for divine vengeance against their enemies, makes some sense in a setting in which they feel so unjustly displaced.

How are dispensationalists to operate in a world increasingly inimical to their beliefs? And how can they maintain their identity amid the existential onslaught of postmodernity? Shuck finds that in the first

eight or so novels of the *Left Behind* series, the Tribulation Force (or Trib Force, composed of those who have become Christians after having been left behind—earlier Christians were raptured prior to the tribulation—and are now working to subvert the infernal designs of Antichrist) actively engages the world, exercising agency in attempting to work for God’s purposes and oppose evil. Rather than withdrawing from networked culture, the underground Trib Force uses the high-tech tools of the beast system, along with several well-placed operatives, to destabilize Antichrist’s networks. In this, Shuck sees a reflection of Christian Smith’s claim that American evangelicals are “embattled and thriving” because they maintain productive tension with the surrounding culture; they are oppositional religiously and ideologically, but they have accommodated to the prevailing modes of operation, including technological media and consumerist culture. In these earlier novels, Shuck perceives an open-endedness, an ability on the part of the protagonists to analyze situations and make meaningful choices. But this element disappears in the later novels, where tensions are flattened and characters are separated into poles of good and evil. In this setting, the Trib Force loses agency by adhering to a predetermined script that leads inexorably to violence and destruction. For Shuck, a preferable and more viable evangelical identity can be worked out in the ambiguity and agency of the earlier novels, which maintain the tensions evangelicals need to flourish. They face the risk of overaccommodation and loss of distinctiveness, particularly in light of their uncritical embrace of network tools and methods, but they remain fully human decision makers in a complex world. By contrast, the later novels, with their drive for fixity in the face of flux, radically simplify the context and eliminate hard decisions. Shuck worries that should dispensationalists seek their identity in this setting they may become beastly themselves and provoke the very apocalypse they prophesy.

Shuck intends to offer an empathetic reading of the *Left Behind* series (19–21). Unquestionably, his use of cultural theory provides stimulating insights into aspects of the novels, such as the symbolic meanings behind LaHaye and Jenkins’s use of “marks,” both the mark of the beast that Antichrist loyalists display and the hidden mark of Christ visible only to other Christians. Yet one wonders if the lens of cultural theory allows for an empathetic interpretation. Given that dispensationalists approach the end times—and thus futurist novels about the end times—in a deeply theological and religious vein, doesn’t empathy require stepping more fully into their religious language and world? Arguably, *Revelation* and *Daniel* are much more important than *Mark Taylor* if one wants an empathetic purchase on dispensationalism.

Too often in Shuck's work lengthy discussions on the postmodern theoretical insights and manifold meanings of a term like "surveillance" substitute for engagement with religious thought, which he approaches as a cipher to be decoded through cultural theory. This distance from the lifeworld of dispensationalists produces some problematic claims. For instance, Shuck's presentist reading leads him to focus fruitfully on the existential suffering of dispensationalists, but it also leads him to conclude monochromatically that dispensationalism is a theology of despair and fatalism. For postmodernists whose inflected philosophical musings demonstrate the patent unsustainability of absolutist religion in the world today, this makes sense. But for Fundamentalists who do not regard their deepest beliefs as untenable and who do truly believe in an imminent and tightly scripted end times in which God prevails over Satan and evil, dispensationalism is a theology of profound, life-changing hope. Shuck sees signs of despair that Fundamentalists may readily overlook, but amid recondite reflexivity he has trouble seeing signs of hope. Further, even a quick tour of popular dispensationalist Web sites (such as <http://www.raptureready.com>) calls into question the notion that network culture erodes fundamentalisms; at least among dispensationalists, the Internet—like television and radio before it—appears to be bolstering their religiosity rather than subverting it.

To his credit, Shuck does show empathy in giving the *Left Behind* novels a serious reading, in spite of his clear alienation from the texts. As a form of popular piety or folk theology, dispensationalism and its cultural products come across to educated elites as gauche, banal, and utterly simplistic. The novels would be harmless enough, of course, but for the fact that so many people appear to be taken in by them. This raises the question of whether prophecy fiction like the *Left Behind* series functions as a kind of safety valve or is truly dangerous. Shuck cannot quite seem to decide. One reading is that dispensationalists are anguished absolutists, left behind by the onrush of cultural and social change, and their futurist fantasies are a publicly innocuous means of letting off steam. Even if so, Shuck provides important insights into the ways prophecy belief harms the very Christian faith and identity it is meant to buttress. In their progression from ambiguity to certainty, bolstered by increasing supernatural confirmations in the form of miracles and divine interventions, the *Left Behind* protagonists eventually no longer need faith in God. They have the infallible script provided by prophecy. "Prophecy belief, which began as a quest for signs of God's will, becomes—in the final analysis—an idol which usurps the position of God, trapping prophecy believers beneath a mass of their own fatalistic assumptions" (195). God, too, must adhere to the end-

times scenario—as interpreted by dispensationalists. Thus, the “prophecies become . . . omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent to believers, assuming the cardinal attributes of God, while relegating God to a subordinate role—everything prophecy believers accuse the Beast and his unwholesome associates of accomplishing” (198). Shuck’s empathetic critique suggests that dispensationalism tragically eviscerates central Christian teachings.

Yet Shuck repeatedly hints at dark fears animating his study, which ring with a less than empathetic tone. LaHaye “is not a prophet of the End of all things, just the End of a political and cultural climate disagreeable to conservative Protestants” (222–23 n. 3). LaHaye “wields enormous power” in “insidious” ways; for instance, candidate George W. Bush “allegedly” met in 1999 with LaHaye’s “mysterious” and “shadowy” Council for National Policy “to seek their blessings” (54, 222 n. 3). Bush himself may or may not be a true believer in dispensationalism, but his administration’s “alarming sense of absolutism” and his “simplified approach to nuanced political questions” correspond to prophecy belief in frightening ways (225 n. 38). Thus, Shuck worries about “the marriage of secular policymakers and prophecy writers,” a “potential alliance” of mutual benefit and disastrous implications (65). Most tellingly, the “aggressive, often militant survivalism” of the Trib Force in the later novels bears a suggestive resemblance to tactics employed by the 9/11 terrorists, as well as organizations like the Irish Republican Army and Hamas (174, 245 n. 35). Shuck is quick to add disclaimers—the works are fictional, it is unlikely LaHaye and Jenkins’s books will lead to violence such as terrorist groups employ, and so forth—but the insinuation is instructive. Finally, Shuck argues that the movement in the novels suggests a “slippage” of dispensationalism toward the theocratic claims and designs of “its more radical Christian Reconstructionist cousins” (205). In sum, dispensationalist leaders have great power already, and they may not be so far from becoming theocratic terrorists who will build the very Beast they fear and thus brutalize the rest of us. All very shadowy, indeed, but so it is with apocalyptic visions animated by fevered dread of dangerous enemies, real or imagined.

Whereas Shuck concludes by asserting that it is Left Behind readers who finally will interpret the novels and decide their meaning for themselves, in *Rapture Culture* Amy Johnson Frykholtm turns to these readers to investigate how they appropriate the texts in their lives. She conducted in-depth interviews with thirty-five readers representing a range of religious commitments, from dispensationalists to Catholics to non-Christians. *Rapture Culture* is not a quantitative study, for which data from more participants would be needed, but an ethnographic and interpretive

analysis of Left Behind readers, whom she located through personal contacts, references from colleagues, and the "snowball method" of interviewees suggesting others.

Like Shuck, Frykholm uses the term "evangelicalism" to designate her target religious and cultural milieu. While useful, "evangelicalism" and its cognates are amorphous and frustrating, subject to much disagreement and varied uses. In this case, they are less helpful in investigating the Left Behind phenomenon than more precise terms, such as "dispensationalists," "prophecy believers," or "Fundamentalists and Pentecostals." Although "evangelical" casts a wider rhetorical net and may help book sales (which might explain why it makes an appearance in Weber's subtitle as well), in fact millions of evangelicals do not adhere to dispensationalism or even premillennialism. If evangelicalism is conceived as an overarching category that encompasses Fundamentalism and Pentecostalism (a vigorously contested point among both groups), along with much else, one can argue that dispensationalism has impacted evangelicalism in substantial ways. But then use of the broader term would require clearer delineation, and both Shuck and Frykholm fail to differentiate sufficiently between evangelicalism and the smaller but significant dispensationalism. Thus, conclusions about the Left Behind series and its dispensationalist readers are too readily applied to more numerous evangelicals.

That said, Frykholm is less interested in an overarching picture than in the detailed personal stories her interviewees tell. For Left Behind readers whose biblical understanding and imaginations have been shaped by dispensationalism, the novels help prophecy come alive. They flesh out in narrative form the complex and sometimes abstruse calculations that inform end-times schemes. For those accustomed to approaching Scripture with a gnostic-like sensibility, seeking a sure code to unravel its detailed secret plans, narratives filled with danger and heroism function to dramatize what otherwise might be esoteric points of doctrine or prophecy. In turn, the narrative framework shapes how readers approach and understand Scripture as well as current events, from which they seek points of correspondence to the end-times story line. The Left Behind series thus provides enormous confirmation to readers inclined to accept its dispensationalist interpretations. Not surprisingly, Christians or non-Christians skeptical of prophecy belief tend not to be swayed by the Left Behind apocalypse, whether or not they regard the books as entertaining. Many of Frykholm's interviewees speak of using the novels as an evangelistic tool, and she notes that some churches have inaugurated programs based on this premise, but these efforts yielded dubious results among her subjects. Those not

inclined to embrace the novels' underlying claims either do not read the gift copies they receive or find them of questionable value.

When the human dimensions of Left Behind readers' stories come through, *Rapture Culture* shines. For example, we learn of a young woman named Katie in the final stages of a PhD program who recently lost her sister Judith in a car accident. For Katie and her family, the Left Behind novels provided comfort in the midst of grief, for they reinforced the hope that they might see Judith sooner rather than later. They had believed in dispensationalism previously, but without much passion; now, in the wake of Judith's death, they cling to the hope of an imminent rapture and reunion with their beloved. Frykholm notes, "For them the solace of heaven is not quite enough. It is too distant, too many years away. The rapture is something they can hope for at every minute. . . . This allows them to live with joyful expectation even in the experience of intense grief" (61). This may seem escapist, but Frykholm sees a family not denying their loss and suffering but finding a meaning in death that reorients their perspectives and how they live moving forward. Even as the Left Behind series can offer solace to the bereaved, Frykholm finds that the novels perform their ideological work by raising persistent doubts in readers about their own salvation, then providing avenues of reassurance. She tells the story of the dispensationalist Leah, who came home late one night to find her husband and daughter out of the house. Instantly, she feared they had been raptured and she was left behind. Although Leah heartily laughs in retelling the story, Frykholm detects an underlying anxiety and need for assurance. The rapture story "brings into focus deeply rooted fears about isolation and personal failure; it plays on these fears in order to produce in even very devout people a nagging uncertainty about their own worthiness. . . . The ideological power of the rapture's 'truth' becomes vivid in Leah's story in the power of the narrative to frighten and discipline her" (151).

Unfortunately, Frykholm's interviewees do not always yield the reactions she desires. The recurring theme of *Rapture Culture* is the author's effort to square her own distaste for the Left Behind series, which she sees as a dreary, shallow tool intended to reinforce offensively conservative politics and religion, with the views of her mainly appreciative subjects. The introduction frames the text quite explicitly in these terms. We learn there that Frykholm grew up in a Christian home, became an evangelical and was active in a Baptist church as a child, then moved away from Christianity through reading feminist literature in high school. She now has "secular, feminist, and sometimes Marxist commitments" (6). There is something to be said for authorial

openness, but perhaps postmodernism has encouraged overexposure. The book's persistent dialectic between Frykholm's convictions and those of her Left Behind readers is occasionally insightful but too often intrusive. For instance, though Frykholm admits her readers are essentially uninterested in gender issues, she spends many pages telling us what they should have thought along these lines. She says "gender is central to the history and development of evangelicalism" and speaks authoritatively of "the patriarchal history of evangelicalism" (90, 96). This supposedly "standard history" might have been challenged or at least nuanced by attention to the work of historians like George Marsden, Janette Hassey, Nancy Hardesty, and Joel Carpenter, among many others (96). Nevertheless, Frykholm recognizes the antifeminist oppression at the heart of the Left Behind series, and she is troubled that her women readers, "nearly all . . . college-educated and professionals," do not (101). After all, the word "rapture" comes from a Latin word meaning "to carry off a woman," and its usage today still subtly inscribes implications of rape (97). Frykholm eschews claims of false consciousness and notes that she reads the novels ideologically and historically, while her subjects look to them for religious edification and entertainment. In the end, "we need to understand the text as a dynamic object, alive in their minds and mine. The text is not just one thing, but instead is written anew with each reader" (102). In other words, different people with their different commitments read texts differently. True, if obvious, but after many pages demonstrating the accuracy of her reading, it feels a tad disingenuous. Instead, she might have explored in some detail how dispensationalists negotiate gender issues—how, for example, male headship can be something other than coercive subordination in their minds and experiences—and the ways the Left Behind series intersected with this realm.

In *The Rapture Exposed*, Barbara R. Rossing critiques dispensationalist readings of Revelation and offers a more hopeful take on the end times. Rossing regards dispensationalist theology as a dangerous "fabrication" and a "racket" foisted upon the unwary (30, 1). It relies on a supposedly literal reading of Scripture that interprets the words according to their "plain sense," but Rossing finds that this hermeneutic is unevenly applied and in fact impossible to follow. Scripture is composed of many types of literature, which must be read with sensitivity to genre, historical context, purpose, and audience, most of which dispensationalists ignore. After all, are we to think of Jesus literally as a "vine" or a "lamb"? Of course dispensationalists do not, any more than others. Their claim to read the Bible in strictly literalist terms, especially with such complex and symbolically rich books as Revelation,

results in what Rossing calls “selective literalism” (193 n. 6). This generates many unmerited assertions, such as the notion that one abstruse passage, Dan. 9:25–27, provides the basic chronology of subsequent sacred history and thus the framework within which to understand Revelation. Like other prophecy fiction writers, LaHaye and Jenkins find biblical warrant for the latest technological tools, from helicopter gunships to high-speed computers, in Revelation’s symbolism. The specious claim of consistent literalism provides license to fervid imaginings while fooling the unwary into accepting its biblical fidelity.

Rossing charges that dispensationalism leads to “appalling ethics” in practice (7). Its endorsement of violence as a meaningful Christian solution to human problems is disturbing. Among other things, dispensationalists ignore or gloss over the environmental devastation their destructive scenarios would entail. Further, since they view human social well-being as trending downward, to be rescued only by Christ’s supernatural intervention, Rossing suggests dispensationalists neglect social and political concerns, especially issues of injustice and oppression. In fact, it appears to be less their neglect than the nature of their political and social involvement that draws Rossing’s ire, including their opposition to abortion, feminism, and the moral normalizing of homosexuality. Like other conservative Christians, dispensationalists have been activists in recent decades concerning what they regard as the oppression of the unborn, the injustices of sexual libertinism, and the assault upon the nuclear family. For Rossing, these forms of public involvement have been repressive rather than liberatory, further inscribing the oppression of women, gays, and others. The ethical touchstone of dispensationalism is the rapture, Rossing contends. The belief that authentic Christians will be raptured prior to the tribulation, then enjoy front-row seats in heaven to watch the earth destroyed, amounts to an addictive, entertaining, “voyeuristic” fantasy (138–40). It displays a yearning for retribution, a palpable lust for divine harm to foes, which is impossible to square with the worship of a crucified savior, one who guaranteed suffering for his followers and extolled self-sacrifice in the service of others. The Bible’s message, Rossing contends, is not that God wants to snatch us out of the world before destroying it but that through the incarnation of Christ God comes to be with us and to redeem the world.

Fundamentally, Rossing argues, dispensationalists misunderstand the nature of prophecy and apocalypse. They see biblical prophecy in futurist terms—that is, it foretells what will happen in the future—but Rossing claims that prophecy is not at all predictive. Instead, it offers warnings to God’s people to eliminate injustice and oppression, or else

bad results will follow. In other words, prophecy offers conditional warnings: either stop harming the poor and weak by your unjust practices, or these practices will lead to destruction. This definition of prophecy is understandable in light of dubious dispensationalist interpretations, but it overstates one dimension of prophecy and neglects another. The New Testament is chock-full of claims that Jesus fulfilled prophecies from Hebrew scripture. The gospel writers, Paul, and other New Testament authors clearly thought prophetic texts had predictive value, or else they would not have cited so many in confirmation of Jesus's identity as the Christ. He was the Messiah, in their view, in part because his place and circumstances of birth, the details of his ministry, and his death and resurrection all fulfilled prophecies. Further, if prophecy has no predictive value, why do devout Jews await Messiah? The relevant question is not whether prophetic scripture points to future events or not but when and how it does, and what the orientation of believers to those expected events should be. Rossing has no trouble regarding Revelation and other New Testament passages as predictive of Christ's Second Coming, the New Jerusalem, God's healing power among the nations, and so on. Put differently, she accepts "positive" passages as predictive of future events (at least symbolically), but she rejects any such reading of the "negative" prophecies, or those entailing divine judgment, punishment, and destruction. Instead, these point to the end of Roman rule. This correlates with Rossing's understanding of the nature of apocalypse, which does not designate future cataclysm but rather a visionary journey in which a person receives divine insight into what could become reality. It is meant to be an urgent "wake-up call," a demand that God's people reform and eliminate injustice or else face dire consequences (91). Dispensationalists wrongly look to prophecy and apocalypse for a detailed delineation of future events filled with reprisal and annihilation.

In place of the dispensationalist formula dramatized by the *Left Behind* series, Rossing offers a "traditional" Christian reading of Revelation (18), a vision of hope and beauty. It would be more accurate to say it is a liberal Protestant reading, with all the optimism characteristic of that particular tradition. God is depicted in terms of love, light, harmony, self-sacrifice, and especially immanence; largely absent are the biblical themes of transcendence, judgment, holiness, and righteousness. Human beings are not plagued primarily by sin, both individually and collectively, but by systemic injustice and oppression. Seemingly all people will enjoy the new creation; Rossing tends toward a soteriological universalism and away from the long history of Christian exclusivity. Centrally, the apocalypse in Revelation is not harmful

and destructive but life affirming. She argues that dispensationalists neglect the context of John of Patmos's vision, the oppression of imperial Rome. Revelation opposes Rome's concept of victory as violent triumph and subjugation with a vision of Christ as a sacrificial lamb, whose nonviolent "Lamb Power" conquers violence and oppression and brings healing to all nations.

Rossing notes that dispensationalists reject the tensions and ambiguities of living in the in-between times, embracing both the "already" and the "not yet" (149). In fact, they do not see Christ as already having conquered sin and his kingdom as truly inaugurated; this will only happen when he sits on a literal throne in Jerusalem. But if dispensationalists deflate the tension by overemphasizing the not yet, Rossing does so by focusing excessively on the already. She argues that Revelation should inform how Christians live today: they need to enter into its vision and see God in beautiful music, lovely mountains and cascading streams, and our own communities, at work establishing the New Jerusalem in our midst. Rossing is not naive about suffering—she writes movingly of witnessing firsthand the sufferings of Palestinians, including Palestinian Christians ignored or even vilified by dispensationalists—but at times she sounds far too optimistic. If dispensationalists neglect the triumph of Christ on the cross, arguably she short-changes both his suffering and the enduring power of sin in human affairs. Put differently, her upbeat vision of the New Jerusalem as a realizing eschatology no doubt plays better in the affluent West than in the barrios and slums of the two-thirds world. It is much harder to find the dawning New Jerusalem in the dark nights of those hellholes. Those who are truly oppressed do not have the luxury of a comfortable, affirming God; they desperately want and need personal redemption and divine vengeance upon the evil that subjugates them. Little wonder it is Pentecostalism and conservative Catholicism—offering a God of miracles, personal transformation, ultimate justice, and yes, destruction of evil, suffering, and their perpetrators—that thrive among the exploited and needy, while many Western churches decline politely among those at ease in the world. For the oppressed, Christ offers redemptive hope, but it is a hard hope found on the other side of suffering.

Finally, Rossing examines the political implications of dispensationalism. She is agitated by dispensationalists' political influence and makes a number of unsupported and alarmist claims about their power over Republican politicians. Dispensationalist linkages with Ronald Reagan and suggestions that George W. Bush's use of the words "evil" and "evildoers" served as apocalyptic code language rest on suspect or

speculative allegations (43–45). Like others, Rossing is sure that dispensationalists must have something to do with bad conservative policies, including the current misguided war, but it is just not clear what that something is. Rossing insists, “the widespread influence of [dispensationalist] prophecy beliefs may play a role in explaining America’s apocalyptic rhetoric of war and evil—and possibly even actual policy decisions coming out of the White House” (46). She hints that whereas John’s vision counteracted the terror and distorted triumphalism of imperial Rome, we should embrace it afresh amid the terror and distorted triumphalism of the imperial United States (113, 119–20, 127, 135). Turning to Israel, Rossing critiques dispensationalists’ unflinching support for Israeli defense and settlement policies and their contempt for Palestinians, including Christians. She heaps the blame on dispensationalists, or “Christian Zionists,” for Israeli policy toward Palestinians but is silent when it comes to criticizing Israel itself or American Jews who support that policy (52, 66, 73, 76). Clearly, dispensationalists have bolstered those who would vigorously defend Israel and regard Palestinians as an implacable enemy, but they do not bear primary responsibility for Israel’s treatment of Palestinians. Still, should they ever have the power to shape policy—whether American foreign policy or Israeli policy—their vision for the Middle East truly is frightening.

For the history and extent of dispensationalist involvement in the Holy Land, Timothy P. Weber’s *On the Road to Armageddon* is excellent. Weber provides a helpful historical overview of dispensationalism in the United States, stressing its sense of control over historical events for those who believed they were losing control in American culture. Whereas postmillennialists anticipated a victorious church winning the world for Christ and establishing God’s millennial kingdom on earth, dispensationalists went to the opposite extreme. Not only would Christian efforts not establish the millennium, in fact Christianity itself and the whole of church history were something of a sideshow or detour, a monumental plan B necessitated by the Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah. Since all earthly prophecy pertains to Israel, the church is not part of God’s prophetic plan for the end times—its calling is heavenly, not earthly—but instead simply fills the gap in time until the eschaton. Among those who saw their form of Christianity coming under assault from science, biblical studies, secularism, and a wayward culture, this interpretation was more compelling than postmillennial triumphalism. Of course, dispensationalism offers its own form of triumphalism—the church and faithful Christians do win out in the end—but one that can account for human decline and failure in the meantime. While dispensationalism did not take hold among elite ministers or in semi-

naries, it succeeded as a populist movement among common folks. A subculture consisting of Bible institutes, prophecy conferences, missions organizations, and parachurch groups ensured the continuing propagation and spread of dispensationalism.

Weber argues that the 1948 establishment of Israel and its expansion in 1967 occasioned a shift in dispensationalist orientation toward activity in the world. Until the latter half of the twentieth century, dispensationalists were content to remain off the field of play, passively watching events unfold from the stands in the belief that the game would reach its necessary conclusion in God's time. After the "miracle" of the Six Days' War of 1967, however, dispensationalists have come down out of the stands and gotten into the game, confident they could shape its outcome to their liking. This is an odd way to frame the argument for an otherwise compelling book. Clearly, dispensationalist activity with regard to Israel has expanded as events have convinced proponents that prophecy is being fulfilled. Yet just as clearly, dispensationalists have believed from the days of Darby that they could influence the timing of Christ's return through their activity. As Weber notes, dispensationalism proved a great stimulant to missionary activity, contrary to the claims of critics that its fatalism would undercut any rationale for missions. Proponents sought to reach the lost for Christ with fresh urgency because the end might arrive soon but also in the belief that they could hasten its arrival. Matthew 24:14 told them that once the word of Christ was preached throughout the world, the end would come. Read literally, this conviction prompted dispensationalists to engage in substantial efforts to translate Scripture and reach remote people groups with the gospel. Along with social ministries designed to promote conversion, dispensationalist missions hardly suggest an image of passivity or spectatorship. Additionally, from the late nineteenth century onward, dispensationalists like William Blackstone played a key role in supporting Zionism. It is the case that dispensationalists, along with other evangelicals, have taken a much more active role in politics since the 1970s, both domestically and abroad, but this has not demonstrated a larger shift from observer to participant. Dispensationalists have always known they were in the game—actually, that they were among its stars—and have always seen Israel as the crucial part of the field of play. They simply have turned over new pages in their long-standing playbook.

Dispensationalism's influence on American foreign policy remains murky, but its influence on the ground in Israel is more concrete. Weber details the nature and extent of dispensationalist ties to Israel's most strident political and religious elements. Organizations such as

the International Christian Embassy of Jerusalem (ICEJ) offer consistent support for hard-line Israeli policies. The ICEJ promotes "tour bus diplomacy" by coordinating Holy Land tours for American dispensationalists (214–18). During these trips, participants learn a great deal about the story and rights of Israel, often through meetings with Israeli politicians or generals; a little about Jesus's life and teachings; and nothing about Palestinians, other than that they have no right to the land of Israel and are destined to be the enemy of God's people. Sometimes tour groups will meet with representatives of the small number of Messianic Jews in Israel but never with the much larger number of Palestinian Christians. The ICEJ also runs an annual Feast of the Tabernacles conference attended by thousands, punctuated by the Jerusalem March through the city. Jewish leaders of the highest standing attend the conference, which with few exceptions has included a supportive speech from the Israeli prime minister. Other organizations, such as Christians for Israel and Bridges for Peace, help Jews from the Soviet Union and elsewhere to immigrate to Israel and supply food for the needy in Israel. Christian Friends for Israeli Communities (CFIC) is one of several groups that provide financial support to Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, or as dispensationalists prefer to call them, Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, the biblical names reinforcing Israel's covenantal right to the land. The CFIC pairs American churches with particular Israeli settlement communities for purposes of fund-raising and political lobbying on their behalf. Not surprisingly, Israel has cultivated relationships with dispensationalists, recognizing their political and financial value, and figures like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell are well known and even revered in Israel as stalwart supporters.

In various ways, then, American dispensationalist organizations lend support to those elements in Israeli society that are most opposed to peace, at least any peace that would entail land transfers or other concessions. Some dispensationalists even believe that Israel must expand beyond its current borders to meet the terms of the covenant God made with Abraham in Gen. 15:18–21. Thus, Israel must control from the Nile to the Euphrates to fulfill God's promise, even though it has never before done so. While diplomats and politicians may strive for a settled peace in the region, and others may pray for it, dispensationalists know that peace is not the prophetic future God intends for Israel. Weber states, "Thanks to the sometimes changing perspectives of their Bible teachers, dispensationalists are certain that trouble in the Middle East is inevitable, that nations will war against nations, and that the time is coming when millions of people will die as a result of nuclear war, the persecution of the Antichrist, or divine judgment. Striv-

ing for peace in the Middle East, in other words, is a hopeless pursuit with no chance of success" (266).

This prophetic certainty becomes especially incendiary with regard to the Temple Mount, currently occupied by the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, the third holiest site in Islam and the spot from which Muslims claim Muhammad ascended into heaven. Dispensationists and Israeli radicals unite in the conviction that Israel must control the Temple Mount and rebuild the temple on the site of the previous two, which most archaeologists believe is precisely where the Dome of the Rock is located. Weber details the financial and ideological support dispensationalists provide to Israeli groups like the Temple Movement and the Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful, which are preparing for temple life by training priests to follow biblical standards, sewing vestments, and making the proper tools for animal sacrifices. American organizations like the Jerusalem Temple Foundation, the Battalion of Deborah, and the International Christian Zionist Center funnel millions of dollars to the cause, convinced that the temple must be rebuilt before Christ will return. Several attempts have been made to retake the Temple Mount by force, albeit usually by isolated individuals, both Jewish and dispensationalist. For years dispensationalists, in association with Jewish temple proponents, have been trying to produce a "perfect red heifer," the ashes of which are required by Numbers 19 for ritual purification before entering the temple. Weber notes the bemused media response to the 1996 announcement that an appropriate heifer had been born. Fortunately, the animal was disqualified before reaching the required three years of age by sprouting a tuft of white hair. To outsiders this was all very puzzling, but Weber quotes one Israeli journalist who recognized that the red heifer was "a four-legged bomb" who could have ignited a massive holy war (265).

Despite the different approaches they bring to dispensationalism and the Left Behind series, the authors cited herein all express the apprehension that adherents may make their prophetic scenarios self-fulfilling. Nowhere is this danger more real and distressing than in Israel. To a situation already filled with hatred, terrorism, and seemingly intractable divisions, dispensationalists add their money, passions, and political lobbying, all in the certainty that they know God's plans for the future. "What would happen," Weber wonders, "if dispensationalists decided to follow the command of Jesus to be peacemakers and left the results to God?" (267). This seems unlikely, given their biblical understanding and the reinforcement it receives through vehicles like the Left Behind series. Shuck, Frykholm, Rossing, and Weber offer one helpful avenue of response; critically dissecting the series, its under-

lying biblical claims, and dispensationalist efforts to unfold prophecy in Israel. If these authors occasionally make alarmist or shrill assertions, they also recognize that dispensationalism presents real perils, not only in the Middle East but also to the minds and souls of those caught up in its intoxicating sway. The power to know the future, the complete assurance of God's will, the elimination of mystery and ambiguity, the destruction of enemies—this is seductive fruit, to be sure, but costly.

Book Reviews

ØKLAND, JORUNN. *Women in Their Place: Paul and the Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space*. New York: T&T Clark International, 2004. x+328 pp. \$125.00 (cloth).

Did the apostle Paul have a coherent “point of view” on women? More specifically, did he communicate clear principles for directing acceptable participation by women in early Christian assemblies? Evidence about “Paul and women” from 1 Corinthians has provoked recent debates about women’s roles in that *ekklesia*, as interpreters have been struck by apparent inconsistencies within the text. For example, Paul seems to contradict himself by first accommodating women’s speech acts in the assemblies (e.g., when they “pray and prophesy”; 1 Cor. 11:5), but later commanding that women not be allowed to speak (1 Cor. 14:34).

In this ambitious book, Jorunn Økland moves interpretation of 1 Corinthians to a new “place,” with a feminist reading that successfully draws upon many areas of scholarship: historical criticism, feminist gender theory, Michel Foucault’s discourse theories, archaeological findings from Roman Corinth, studies of early house churches and associations, and evidence from Paul’s literary contemporaries (primarily Philo and Josephus). From these varied perspectives, Økland examines again Paul’s claims about the roles of women in the ritual gatherings of the *ekklesia* of Corinth. The product is a satisfyingly complex reading of 1 Corinthians (chaps. 11–14 in particular) that convincingly explains the tensions found within Paul’s writings about women while proposing fresh options for assessments of early Christian women.

Økland’s proposal is not new—that Paul wrote to the Corinthians from the particularities of his historical contexts (e.g., as a Greco-Roman Jew, well versed in Jewish scripture but also shaped by classical philosophical perspectives on gender)—yet her argument builds on new considerations of evidence about such influences on Paul. Økland concludes from the different gender discourses that informed his experience and thought—discourses that limited but did not entirely eliminate his authorial choices—that Paul’s resulting directives did not always combine in a thoroughly logical manner. However, they did always derive from hierarchical worldviews that were “phallogocentric” (a term taken from Luce Irigaray). In such ideologies, Økland states, “the male is norm, the world is interpreted according to a *logos* that is defined by the masculine, whereas the feminine can only be represented insofar as it stands in relation to the masculine through identity or likeness, through opposition, or through complementarity” (16). Since Paul was immersed in gendered hierarchical perspectives, he viewed the entire cosmos as being created of masculine and feminine components precisely arranged in a ladder of existence.

The result in 1 Corinthians is not a “feminist Paul,” who was then unfairly maneuvered by later canonical writers into a more sexist mold. If anything, Økland suggests, the authors of the deutero-Paulines and the Pastorals follow

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in the footsteps of a “patriarchal Paul.” Her examination shows instead the broad consistencies within Paul’s “gender discourse” found in 1 Corinthians. Thus, it is no longer necessary to question whether the disputed verses at the end of 1 Corinthians 14—commanding women’s silence—are interpolated, since their intent correlates with Paul’s conviction that male and female involvement in Christian rituals ought to reflect carefully this gendered cosmos (chaps. 5–6).

How the Corinthians understood Paul’s instructions is another story. Using Victor Turner’s ritual theory, along with archaeological deductions about women’s participation in Corinthian cults, Økland hypothesizes that the Corinthians’ perceptions about their own city’s sanctuary spaces—their architecture, locations, inscriptions, mythologies, and ritual performances—did not necessarily jibe with Paul’s deeply Hellenistic-Jewish monotheistic cosmology, with its focus on the Jerusalem Temple. Building on Antoinette C. Wire’s rhetorical analysis, she conjectures, “The Corinthians who received the letters were shaped by the Corinthian discourse [of sanctuary and ritual], and (mis-)conceived his text from within this discursive framework” (243). The recipients’ probable misunderstandings mingled with what Økland calls the “tension” in Paul’s two main lines of argument and thus produced “a space in-between them, for negotiation and women’s initiatives, but also for the opposite: for leaving women in a double bind” (219).

In the end, however, Økland remains entirely skeptical about the possibility of “recovering” historical women: “I do not believe that there is any point in searching for particular, Corinthian Christian women behind the ‘woman’-term at the textual surface level of 1 Corinthians” (224). Rather, she provides this intricate study of the blending of several ancient discourses—philosophical-cosmological, Hellenistic-Jewish, Pauline, Corinthian—as discerned in texts, inscriptions, city plans, and architectural design from Roman Corinth. From that “unsettled” mixture, Økland creatively envisions “an ocean of possibilities” of gender models and ritual performances in both the writing and the reception of 1 Corinthians (245–46).

ANNETTE BOURLAND HUIZENGA, *Chicago, Illinois.*

CHANCEY, MARK A. *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus*. Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series 134. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xvii+285 pp. \$90.00 (cloth).

Religious practices often leave archaeologically distinct remains. This premise informs Mark Chancey’s serious challenge to the reimagining of Christian origins in Greek (Cynic) philosophers roaming first-century Galilee that some historical Jesus scholars popularized in the 1980s and 1990s based on purported high levels of Hellenization in the archaeological record. Chancey argues persuasively that such a depiction oversimplifies and overstates the nature of the *realia*. The monograph draws on the author’s experience in the Sephoris Regional Project directed by Eric M. Meyers, Chancey’s mentor, and continues the research agenda that began with Chancey’s revised Duke University dissertation (*The Myth of a Gentile Galilee* [Cambridge, 2002]).

First and foremost, the argument calls for greater attention to methodology: archaeological data from later periods do not accurately reflect the situation in an earlier period; the Romans did not “occupy” Galilee until 120 CE, a

watershed date for change in the material culture toward Hellenization; "Hellenization" was not uniform or homogeneous across the ancient Mediterranean. "We scholars," Chancey writes, "have been quicker to recognize the diversity in the *Judaism* of Hellenistic Judaism than in the *Hellenism* of Hellenistic Judaism" (229). Very true.

The study is organized by chronology. Chapter 1 examines the late Persian and Hellenistic periods. Chancey finds that virtually all evidence for Hellenistic culture in Palestine emanates outside Galilee: "The region was not a hotbed of Hellenism. There was no massive influx of Greek settlers, apparently few Greek inscriptions, and little Hellenistic architecture. Hellenistic culture was the culture of cities, not villages, and Galilee as yet had no major cities" (33). Chapter 2 highlights a major point of the book, namely, that "Hellenization" was a product not of the Greeks but of the Roman army (43). "In the time of Jesus, there were no Roman army units, no colonists, and probably few, if any, Roman administrators in Galilee" (69). Readers may object, invoking the canonical Gospels. "The only case for a Roman presence," replies Chancey, "hangs by the most slender of threads, the story of Jesus and the centurion at Capernaum (Matt. 9:5–13; Luke 7:1–10)"; the "centurion" is most likely a Herodian officer (51–55). Moreover, concerning the Healing of the Gerasene/Gadarene Demoniac whose name is "Legion" (Mark 5:1–20 and par.), any argument about its origins in the hostility of an indigeneous people against colonial occupiers "must reckon with the fact that the Roman presence in pre-70 CE Palestine was minimal" (56).

Chapters 3 and 4 contrast architecture in first-century Galilee with that in other regions and in later times, demonstrating the increased visibility of Greco-Roman architectural conventions in the second and third centuries, which transformed the landscape. "Sepphoris, in particular, has sometimes been represented in New Testament scholarship as the prototypical Roman city, but the evidence allows for only more modest interpretations" (82). A central plank of the argument is negative: no Greco-Roman temple has been discovered at Sepphoris, and "no pagan shrine has yet been discovered" anywhere in first-century Galilee, a point emphasized a bit redundantly (85, 90, 98, 106–7, 115). Chapter 5, which I found to be the most interesting, proves the evidence upon which some biblical scholars claim that the historical Jesus knew (some) Greek to be misinterpreted. Problematic is the lumping together of epigraphic finds from all over Palestine without attention to the important variables of geography and chronology or to the complex relationship between the epigraphic and the oral uses of languages. The evidence for Greek being frequently spoken in Galilee does not appear until circa 120 CE, when a Roman legion made its first permanent base there (141). In regard to coins (chap. 6) and mosaics, frescoes, statues, and figurines (chap. 7), Chancey finds much the same pattern of a shift toward Hellenization beginning only in the second century CE. "At no point" do extant first-century statues, for example, "identify any Galilean communities as having idols" (206). Archaeology has uncovered no distinct remains of Greco-Roman paganism in the region during the time of Jesus.

I highly recommend this book. Chancey makes a compelling case that "the extent of Greco-Roman culture in Galilee during the lifetime of Jesus has been greatly exaggerated" (229). Yet, like all studies based on archaeological data, this one is somewhat provisional. Chancey helpfully replies to potential objections that his strict chronological method may ignore other factors, which may

suggest that there was considerably more evidence for Greco-Roman culture than he allows, such as “the haphazard nature of archaeological discovery, the randomness of survival, and the obliteration of earlier buildings by later construction” (224). It will be difficult to refute his thesis without a material change in the current pattern of archaeological finds in Galilee.

J. ALBET HARRILL, *Indiana University*.

HALL, DAVID H. *The Unity of the Corinthian Correspondence*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 251. London: T&T Clark, 2003. ix+280 pp. \$59.95 (paper).

In his new book, David Hall argues that the so-called super apostles who opposed Paul in 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 11:5) were also the instigators of the crisis lying behind 1 Corinthians. Hall identifies these “super apostles” as eloquent Christian sophists who, unlike Paul, took money for their services. As a secondary thesis, Hall also insists that 1 and 2 Corinthians look as they did originally; neither letter is a composite.

In the first part of the book, Hall mounts arguments against the division of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians (chaps. 2–5). The background and teaching of Paul’s opponents and the nature of the dispute between Paul and the opponents follow (chaps. 6–9). In the final chapters (chaps. 10–12), Hall provides his own chronology of the relationship between Paul and the church at Corinth.

While it makes sense to look for stronger connections between 1 and 2 Corinthians than are typically acknowledged, Hall’s case is weakened by his use of questionable arguments. Although Hall himself acknowledges that there is no direct information about opponents in 1 Corinthians (129), he nevertheless describes the crisis behind 1 Corinthians almost exclusively in terms of these alleged external opponents of Paul. The evidence from 1 Corinthians, to the contrary, suggests that the crisis resulted (at least in part) from internal disputes of factions that had arisen without outside help or support. Hall argues that the slogans of 1 Cor. 1:11–12 do not really point to factions loyal to Paul, Apollos, and so on, but point “cryptically” to factions encouraged by the intruding Christian sophists. This alternative interpretation is unconvincing.

Where Hall’s arguments are not forced, they are highly speculative. An example appears in Hall’s description of the background and teaching of the opponents. While his conclusion that Paul’s opponents were Jewish (based upon 2 Cor. 11:22) is certainly credible, it is difficult to accept much that he suggests beyond that. Since there is no reference to law observance in the Corinthian correspondence and since rhetorical ability (and Paul’s lack of it) is an issue in these letters, Hall concludes that Paul’s opponents were Hellenistic rather than Palestinian Jews. But Hall’s speculation does not end there. He further suggests that the teaching of these Hellenistic Jewish opponents consisted primarily of allegorical scriptural interpretation because—based on very few examples—this was the dominant characteristic of Hellenistic Jewish teaching. Hall then turns to the enigmatic 2 Corinthians 3 to suggest that the opponents’ scriptural exposition “must have demanded obedience to the Law in a non-literal and allegorical sense” (140).

Hall’s overuse of methodologically questionable mirror reading to flesh out the language and teaching of the opponents also weakens his argument. Al-

though he attempts to provide rigorous criteria for detecting the opponents' language, he nevertheless reads too much into the texts. Particularly troubling is Hall's criterion of "unexplained ideas" by which he means "a word or phrase that is not obviously relevant to the context and is not explained." Such a word or phrase "probably echoes something said by the Corinthians" (203). But what is "obviously relevant?" This criteria opens the door to attributing a (perhaps clumsy) change of subject, an allusion we do not recognize, or a passage that we do not adequately understand to the Corinthians (or to Paul's opponents).

Hall's insistence on the unity of 2 Corinthians and his unwillingness to acknowledge the possibility that the "letter of tears" (2 Cor. 2:4) did not survive antiquity have not only overly complicated his arguments; they have forced him into convoluted conclusions. In order to square his identification of the "letter of tears" with the rather calm and balanced tone of 1 Corinthians, for instance, Hall concedes that Paul's "logical approach" in 1 Corinthians "[was] necessary under the circumstances, and therefore [Paul] kept under control the fire that was burning within him" (224).

Finally, Hall dismisses (or ignores) the work of much recent scholarship on the social background of the Corinthian correspondence (particularly by Theissen). This scholarship suggests that the crisis behind 1 Corinthians arose, at least in part, from internal issues surrounding wealth and status that pitted members of the community against one another. While many of Hall's criticisms of Theissen are warranted, his wholesale rejection of most recent scholarship in this vein is not.

While Hall's book presents some interesting exegetical arguments, in the long run it has too many weaknesses to be persuasive. Although Hall's willingness to challenge conventional wisdom is refreshing, his inability to ground his conclusions with more solid textual evidence ultimately reaffirmed my conviction that the situation behind 1 Corinthians differed from that of 2 Corinthians and bolstered my belief in the composite nature of 2 Corinthians.

PAUL B. DUFF, *George Washington University*.

EPP, ELDON JAY. *Junia: The First Woman Apostle*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005. xvii+138 pp. \$16.00 (paper).

Based on his essay "Text-Critical, Exegetical, and Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting the Junia/Junias Variation in Romans 16,7" (in *New Testament Textual Criticism and Exegesis: Festschrift J. Delobel*, ed. Adelbert Denaux, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 161 [Leuven: Peeters, 2002], 227–91), the goal of Eldon Jay Epp's *Junia* is "to explain the basis in modern times on which Junia, a fellow worker with Paul, was denied her rightful place as an apostle" (xv).

This slim volume is divided into two parts. The first part, titled "Contemporary Textual Criticism," places the narrow topic of Junia in a wider methodological context (chap. 1). Perhaps because the earliest (unaccented) manuscripts do not inform his question, Epp launches his defense that Ἰουνίαν rightly represents a feminine accusative by advocating a close relationship between textual criticism and exegesis. Text criticism, he writes, is currently undergoing a "loss of innocence," coming to grips with the limits of the method (12–13). Most useful in combating these limitations are, according to Epp, "artful skills of judgment" (12). Selected exemplars of the method are Adela

Yarbro Collins on Mark 1:1 (8) and David C. Parker on divorce/remarriage in the New Testament gospels (9–11).

The second half of part 1 (chap. 2) treats variant readings in passages involving gender issues, most notably 1 Cor. 14:34–35. This passage is summarily dismissed as interpolation by Epp (15–20) to set up his discussion of Rom 16:7: “If Paul did not insist on women keeping silent in the churches might he also recognize a woman as an apostle?” (21). Unfortunately, the conclusion that Paul did not insist on women keeping silent in the churches does not follow from an assessment of 1 Cor. 14:34–35 as interpolation. Omission is not an argument for rejection. Reciprocally, inclusion alone does not necessarily constitute an argument for acceptance; that is, establishing Junia as a female apostle does not necessarily (per the book’s back cover) shed “new light on women’s leadership” in early Christianity. Establishing Junia as a female apostle simply demonstrates that in Rom. 16:7 Paul greets a female apostle.

In the nine concise chapters of part 2, Epp lays to rest a question that an overwhelming majority of New Testament exegetes from late antiquity to the present never had, with the exception of a short fifty-year phase from approximately 1927 to 1993 (Epp’s point; see chart, 62–63): whether *Ἰουλίαν* in Rom 16:7 refers to a woman or man. Epp summarizes the problem: “The accusative singular form *Ἰουλίαν* can be either the feminine *Ἰουλίαν* (from *Ἰουλίᾱ*, -ᾱς, ῆ, ‘Junia’) or masculine. The latter could take two forms (as has been postulated), either *Ἰουλίαν* (from *Ἰουλίᾱς*, -ᾱ, ὁ ‘Junias’), or *Ἰουλίαν* (from *Ἰουλίᾱς*, -α, ὁ ‘Junias’), both of which would be nouns of the first declension understood as shortened forms of the Greek name *Ἰουλιανός* (Junianos) or the Latin name Iunianus” (23). After a careful assessment of primary and secondary literature, Epp concludes that the feminine accusative is intended. Evidence favoring his position includes: (1) Junia was a common Roman name, (2) ancient writers without exception read *Ἰουλίαν* as Junia, (3) *Ἰουλίαν* was the reading of the Greek New Testament from Erasmus (1517) to Nestle (1927), (4) all early translations transcribe the name as feminine, (5) “Junia” was understood in all English translations of the New Testament from Tyndale (1526/1534) until the late nineteenth century, (6) neither of the masculine forms is attested in ancient texts anywhere, and (7) the contraction hypothesis (i.e., Lat. *Junianus*) is flawed (23–24). Epp’s conclusions, if not new, are utterly persuasive.

Epp treats his opposition with a firm yet gentle hand, occasionally, for example, placing blame on tools rather than technique (50–51). When it is necessary, however, he is not afraid to identify shoddy research (72–78). That said, Joseph Barbor Lightfoot is treated perhaps too unsympathetically, at one point assuming virtually all responsibility for the brief phase of history endorsing the hopelessly flawed “Junias” reading (67; cf. also 25–26). According to Epp, Lightfoot reads “Junias” solely because she is identified as an apostle: “Hence, the shift that we observe from ‘Junia’ to ‘Junias’ in the RV of 1881 was hardly occasioned by noble, scholarly reasons (if it had been, Lightfoot, the quintessential scholar, might have been expected to have spelled them out)” (67).

This treatment of Lightfoot points to an inherent tension within Epp’s argument. Although Epp finds the gender of *Ἰουλίαν* a compelling enough question to take up in more than one publication, throughout the book he treats his conclusion as self-evident (e.g., 47, 50, 59, 76). His conclusion, however, is not self-evident, thankfully, or his project would be groundless. If exegesis is permitted to inform the reading, as Epp grants, the following observations provide background. The sociohistorical contexts of Rom. 16:7—whether Pharisaism, Ju-

daism, Hellenism, Roman, or all of the above—are indisputably patriarchal, signaling a difficulty with respect to women's leadership. Paul's life context (i.e., undisputed letters) reflects little to no interaction with women. The context of the Pauline corpus suggests Paul sought to supersede gender distinctions by promoting a philosophy of life in Christ. And the context of a Pauline epistle leaves open the possibility that Paul's reference to Junia reflects mere protocol, obsequy, or even sarcasm. In sum, the many contexts explorable through exegetical analysis outline circumstances for Rom. 16:7 inconsistent with acknowledgment, let alone approbation, of a female leader. This friction validates Epp's project and all flawed attempts to construe Junia as male as well.

For the present reviewer at least, irony dogs interest in gender issues in texts that mainly resist them. This irony does not change the fact that scholars continue to insist, in error, that Junia was male, requiring corrections such as those provided here by Epp. It also says nothing of Epp's first-rate documentation of research on the topic. The irony does, however, beg the question of why we pose questions of texts that the texts themselves do not explore.

Epp's book illustrates that dogmatic assumptions often prejudice scholarly conclusions. More than once Epp castigates the guild for sluggishness on this point (e.g., 13). I would simply add that if we really want "a more egalitarian world" for our grandchildren (v) we ought to subject increasing numbers of our assumptions, both minor and major, to the type of "artful judgment" this book both extols and represents and presume to act on these new judgments in both our scholarly work and life.

I caught only one error. On page 79 the Nestle edition of 1927 is referred to as the "twenty-seventh," rather than as the thirteenth.

CLARE K. ROTHSCILD, *Lewis University, Chicago/Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich.*

BUELL, DENISE KIMBER. *Why This New Race? Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. xiv+257 pp. \$47.50 (cloth).

The title of Denise Kimber Buell's thoughtful study is taken from the beginning of the *Epistle to Diognetus* (*Ep. Diog.*), in which the author of this apologetic tractate suggests that "Diognetus" is interested, among other inquiries about Christianity, to know "why this new race (*genos*) or practice has come to life at this time, and not formerly?" Buell's project is to remind us that *Ep. Diog.* is indeed only one of many examples in early Christian discourse where the language of race/ethnicity is deployed in self-definition and to explore implications of this fact over against conventional characterizations of Christianity as a "transethnic" religion. Of course Buell is well aware of classic universalizing symbols in Christian tradition (e.g., the "neither Jew nor Greek" formula of Gal. 3:28), but she is deeply suspicious that unexamined claims about Christianity as ethnotranscendent may "covertly encode racism and ethnocentrism" (165). For example, she argues that an effective result is often anti-Judaism when Christianity is contrasted with Judaism by the assertion that the former has "transcended" race/ethnicity (11).

Buell finds a parallel also in polemical discourse about "orthodoxy versus heresy," with several early "heresies" caricatured as committed to "fixed" ethnic categories (e.g., some are allegedly "too Jewish" [231 n. 10], or others declare they are "A Genos Saved by Nature" [116–37]). She contends that such cari-

cature (finding its way also into scholarly accounts) depends upon and promotes essentialist notions of race/ethnicity in general. A centerpiece in Buell's argument is to underscore the "double-sidedness" in ethnic reasoning, entailing not only themes of "fixity" (e.g., assertions of identity by ancestry) but also "fluidity" (e.g., language of achievement, conversion). This explains how "ethnic reasoning" can stress both identity as a "people" yet paradoxically also include universal claims. Much of the book is devoted to illustrating just this double-sided feature across a range of ancient traditions: in the case of "Romanness," "Greekness," or "Jewishness," as well as in diverse Christian assertions about belonging to a "new/third *genos*," or an "immovable" or "spiritual *genos/genea*" (e.g., in "Sethian" or "Valentinian" texts).

Buell's book is richly informed by modern theory on race and ethnicity. The problems with these categories, and particularly the powerful arguments against essentializing them, are not new, though this volume certainly offers excellent case studies illustrating the point. Also not so new is the mere fact that the language and imagery of race/ethnicity appear prominently in a variety of early Christian sources. However, Buell's contribution is to force us to attend to this language in a different way. She will not let us simply call it metaphor when it is from the pen of an "orthodox" Christian author but exclusivist racialism in a Valentinian Christian text or ethnic boundedness in Jewish sources. Her analysis is quite in tune with a growing body of scholarship that has revealed the rhetorical distortion in heresiological accusations that it is always the opponents who market "fixity" (e.g., soteriological determinism). Her framing of the issues around the use of ethnoracial language across a spectrum of Christian writings is a superb fresh angle, unobstructed by customary classifications into "orthodox" and "heretical." And we should benefit from extended reflection on her criticism of typologies that protect "Christianity's privileged place as the unmarked referent for 'religion' with its idealized construction as transcending race" (24).

If Buell's study rightly reminds us of the importance of taking ethnoracial discourse seriously, one might nevertheless caution against too quickly dismissing the seriousness also of transethnic discourse. In many ways a reading of her overall argument only sharpens the question of why even groups who stress in some way the transcendence of ethnoracial distinctions nevertheless continue to use, even if on a different register, ethnoracial language? But in the other direction: how do we explain that interest in transethnic discourse at all? Presumably there may be various motives, ranging anywhere from totalizing agendas to augment power to quite sincere concerns for diminishing or eliminating conflict and walls of separation. One can fully appreciate Buell's challenge to glib assertions of Christianity's "special" transethnicity and, in that sense, her suspicion of its invocation in explanations of "how Christianity succeeded" (28). However, she herself seems committed to respecting, at least on some level, differences between traditions where lineage or kinship is foregrounded against cases in which the emphasis is on acquisition or achievement (e.g., 41, 95). Indeed a very respectable case can be and has been made, without necessarily concealing the freight of any privileging of Christianity, that the foregrounding of symbols of transethnicity may indeed alter social dynamics and can constitute a factor in the numerical success of a given movement. Buell's provocative analysis will likely generate many further questions, and the book deserves wide reading.

MICHAEL A. WILLIAMS, *University of Washington, Seattle.*

BROWN, MICHAEL JOSEPH. *The Lord's Prayer through African Eyes: A Window into Early Christianity*. New York: T&T Clark International, 2004. xiv+298 pp. \$34.95 (paper).

Titles of books should give some indication of the contents. However, if readers are looking for an extended treatment of African understandings of the Lord's Prayer (LP), this is not the book. The small portion of the book dedicated to the LP would not justify the price of the book or the pages readers would have to read to learn anything about African thinking about the LP.

So what is this book? A revised dissertation written under Hans Dieter Betz, the book attempts to situate prayer as cultic *didache* in late antique Alexandria and Carthage. The book begins by prying into the mind of a possible pagan auditor of the LP. Brown takes each line of the LP and presents a hypothetical interpretation, based on the elements of Greco-Roman religions that comport most closely to the various petitions. The main problem in reading the first chapter is that the detailed considerations of prayer in Greco-Roman religions are in the second chapter, a placement opposite that of the dissertation. This makes the first chapter a bit opaque if not incomprehensible for all but the most knowledgeable readers. Subsequent chapters treat the religiocultural situation in Alexandria, Clement on prayer, the situation in Carthage, Tertullian on prayer, and a summarizing comparison of the two theologians.

Carthage is a decent choice for exploring the LP: Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine all wrote treatises on it, although Brown uses the least developed, that of Tertullian. Alexandria is a stranger choice since Clement's *Stromateis*, Brown's chosen text, does not comment on it. In fact, in Brown's opinion, Clement deliberately eschews a consideration of this prayer.

So what is this book really about? It is about the nature of petitionary prayer in two contrasting authors whose differing approaches to prayer are strongly influenced by their ambient cultures. The best parts of the book are the explorations of those cultures. The bibliography for those chapters might form the spine of a course on prayer in Christian antiquity.

For an author whose hermeneutic is based on the investigation of cultic *didache*, "critical reflection upon cultic practices" (xii), it is quite a mystery why there is no consideration of Christian liturgy, the setting in which the LP would first be encountered. For Brown the philosophical and ambient non-Christian religious thought and practices are the only contexts examined. Here the book is a useful reflection on petitionary prayer among several Mediterranean religions and philosophical sects.

Brown's conclusions are that Clement, a speculative thinker who is willing to take risks, rejects petitionary prayer when concerned with the acquisition of things and conditions of life because they conflict with the notion of an all-knowing God remote from humanity. Given his Gnostic environment, the only proper petition requests the proper state of mind by which to receive gnosis. His ecclesiology concerns itself both with Gnostic insiders and with those who do not yet have wisdom. For Tertullian, a similar sense of God's providence prevails but only in the context of Punic and Roman materialism, practicality, and concern for "ecclesial, anthropological, and doctrinal questions" (230). Tertullian's ecclesiology is much less inclusive than Clement's.

Problems with this book include the broad historical swath from which Brown selects his evidence. Primal Greek religion seems unaffected by Alexandrian culture. Evidence of Roman religion comes primarily from the first

centuries BCE and CE and seems to be little affected by mystery religions (74). Conclusions on the lack of specific petitionary prayer in Roman religion (e.g., 65) ignore the material remains of amulets and defixation tablets. The edition of Clement's *Stromateis* that Brown used (in translation) is never cited in the bibliography. The proofreading of the text should have caught the numerous obscure abbreviations not referenced in the "List of Abbreviations," errors such as "Gela" for "Geta" (184) and "lectors" for "lictors" (187), as well as the fact that definitions of terms were given only after multiple uses. Most disappointing are the extensive use of inferior English translations of Greek and Latin texts and the fact that the extensive sections on Greco-Roman culture are never really connected in any substantive way to the nature of Greco-Roman or Christian prayer.

This book contains a useful bibliography on some aspects of prayer in antiquity and provides a mass of detail on the histories of Alexandria and Carthage. It should not be used as a writing model for graduate students who wish to publish their dissertations.

MAUREEN A. TILLEY, *University of Dayton/Fordham University*.

HEAL, FELICITY. *The Reformation in Britain and Ireland*. Oxford History of the Christian Church. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. xvi+568 pp. \$125.00 (cloth); \$45.00 (paper).

In launching this impressive series, the general editors of the Oxford History of the Christian Church—Henry and Owen Chadwick—hoped that each of the contributors would pay particular attention to the place of the churches in surrounding society, the institutions of church life, the manifestations of popular religion, the link with the forms of national culture, and the intellectual tradition within and beyond Europe. In this volume, Felicity Heal has achieved those ends admirably, with a richly nuanced account that complements beautifully Owen Chadwick's own (*The Early Reformation on the Continent* [Oxford, 2003]), released in the same year.

Heal begins her narrative in mid-August 1553. John Bale, Protestant polemicist, dramatist, and bishop of Ossory in the Irish marches (those tracts of land bordering on two countries and claimed by both), had just fled from his episcopal see in Dublin. Bale was a vigorous protagonist of the "hot gospelling" generation of men whose objective was "not to re-educate, but to re-convert the world" (2). That small summer incident from his autobiographical *Vocacyon* provides a proscenium arch for the entire period Heal wishes to stage.

In Heal's rendering, it is clear that the Tudor Reformation was "incontrovertibly political" (3). But fundamental to the institutionalization of the Reformation in northern Europe, as she sees it, were clergy—like Bale. To be sure, the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* was key. Nevertheless, the principal process by which ordinary Catholics became Protestant was one of accommodation and adjustment. "The displacement of the old—the loss of the Catholic liturgy, of saints, of prayer for the dead—was followed by slow reconstruction, as conformity was built into acceptance of new liturgy, preaching and Bible reading" (6). The success of the Reformation in England depended upon the sort of evangelism Bale undertook. "The watchword of the evangelists was preaching—preaching and more preaching—with Scripture as the sole authority for the Word spoken" (261).

These two dramatic plotlines—political fiat and clergy implementation—are woven throughout the four “acts” of Heal’s study. Part 1 characterizes the traditional order prior to the Reformation. Heal takes pains to document the fact that the monarchical power of medieval Catholicism “was constantly devolved and evolved away from the curial centre” (38). While the failures of many of its individual representatives were everywhere apparent, she notes that the dignity of the priesthood was nevertheless upheld (43), and the parish was the prime expression of corporate identity for the vast majority of the populations of the British Isles (81). With remarkable economy, Heal describes the politics of reform between 1530 and 1558 in part 2, as well as clergy and lay responses to those years of change. Taking as a point of departure the “official” and “popular” iconography conjoined for the frontispiece of the Great Bible (1939), part 3 is a tour de force in its analysis of the notion that “the prince gave the gift of the Word to his people, and that the preacher expounded it to an informed laity” (258). The discussion of theology and worship in chapter 8, which, Heal acknowledges in the preface (viii), received the careful scrutiny of Diarmaid MacCulloch, does a masterful job in distinguishing the contributions of the English reformers of the sixteenth century from those of their counterparts on the Continent. Not unexpectedly, the two chapters that comprise part 4’s treatment of the period between 1558 and 1600 deal with how the Elizabethan settlement(s) played out both politically and religiously in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales (353–424).

In seeking to do justice to the ways in which the three kingdoms and four nations of the British archipelago responded to the most traumatic experience of the sixteenth century, Heal confines her narrative to roughly 1500–1600, a period longer than that given by some treatments that halt the story of religious change in 1560 or 1570, but she refuses to extend it so far as 1642 (which Peter Marshall does, in his *Reformation England* [London, 2003]), or further, even into the eighteenth century. Deftly handling both primary sources and the best of recent scholarship, she lends further support to the revisionist position—now accepted by most historians of the English Reformation (following Christopher Haigh’s 1993 argument): the Reformation in Britain and Ireland was “slow,” gradually achieved, not precipitously imposed. As chapter 10, “Reforming People and Community: Church, Clergy, and Laity, 1558–1600,” draws to a close, Heal warns us that her lucid presentation of this extraordinarily complex era can never be too neat. “The taming of the Reformation,” she notes, “involved constant negotiation between clergy and laity, elites and ordinary men and women: negotiations that modified the religious landscape in ways not necessarily anticipated in official formulae” (478).

GREGORY ALLEN ROBBINS, *University of Denver*.

PRIOR, CHARLES W. A. *Defining the Jacobean Church: The Politics of Religious Controversy, 1603–1625*. Cambridge Studies in Modern British History. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. x+294 pp. \$85.00 (cloth).

In his sermon from the Cross, St. Paul’s Cross in London in 1593, Adam Hill called the Jacobeans “the grave fathers of this land.” They were assailed by critics for having maintained that their positions in the church—and superiority rather than parity in the ministry—corresponded with the arrangements prescribed by Scripture. Their gravity, they said, and their willingness to sup-

press dissidents constituted England's foremost bulwark against the kind of religious diversity that led to political disorder.

In Charles Prior's fine new book, Jacobethan bishops and their apologists are the conformists; their critics are reformists, presbyterians prominent among them. *Defining the Jacobean Church* is scrupulously fair to both sides, but the winners get top billing in the title and the text. In effect, they do the "defining," "conformists [who] wished to provide spiritual legitimacy for an institution that was also conspicuously domiciled within channels of civil sovereignty" (205–6). Prior admirably repossesses the polemical context, recording thrust and counterthrust and laying out the conformist case as it developed on each of "two planes" (113). On the first, "practical" plane, bishops were the regime's representatives. They, their deputies, diocesan courts, and special commissions managed everyday matters. They lectured lesser magistrates, monitored midwives, and—with resolutions formulated in their convocations and translated into injunctions during visitations—attempted to restrict the spread of residual Roman Catholicism and to douse outspoken puritans' incendiary opinion before either threatened the realm's peace. "If you will have schisme abandoned," Bishop Barlow of Rochester told King James VI and I at Hampton Court, "maintain and continue this government episcopall" (*One of Foure Sermons* [London, 1606], 16v). On the second of Prior's "planes," the conformists and reformists fought for Christian antiquity. The latter maintained that episcopacy originated in late second- and third-century church councils; hence, however practical it might seem in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, episcopacy was unbiblical, ergo objectionable, and at the very precipice of "papistickall." The conformists, carpeting their platform with scriptural and patristic citations, claimed that the apostles were episcopal, that the apostles' heirs—England's bishops—given their pedigree, were biblical as well as eminently practical, and that the Jacobethan church was a magnificently well-appointed civic and spiritual establishment, a politically useful and religiously legitimate church.

Prior is alert to the difficulties that conformists had in holding their position in the heated discussions during which all religiously reformed factions reviled Catholicism and distinguished their preferred disciplines from "popish tyranny." True, he had to ration his attention, but inasmuch as the reformists constantly complained that their adversaries—on hierarchy, ceremony, and inquisitorial interrogations—were too Roman to be right, his coverage of the Catholic factor is somewhat disappointing. His *Defining*, on the whole, however, enlightens and delights. Its expositions of an impressive number of sources splendidly illustrate the conformist cause. It effectively sifts the problems occasioned when some apologists' *jure divino* claims for episcopacy seemed to conflict with the crown's jurisdiction. And Prior usefully escorts readers north to discover how the conformist ideas tested during Elizabeth's reign in England fared in Scotland after James VI and I moved south.

There is enough here to fulfill Prior's promises—to remind students of religious history that more than soteriology was at stake when Calvinists and proto-Arminians or anti-Calvinists quarreled in the run-up to Montague's *New Gagg* and Laud's ambitions and to supply specialists with specimens, his own consideration of which enlivens our study of the period's "practical ecclesiology." *Defining*, then, is exceptionally successful at documenting how "the debates that took place between [better, "among"] Jacobean Protestants continued along rifts opened in the late Elizabethan Church" (262).

PETER IVER KAUFMAN, *University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.*

HINDMARSH, D. BRUCE. *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. xiv+384 pp. \$110.00 (cloth).

D. Bruce Hindmarsh's *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative* fills an inexplicably hitherto vacant niche in our understanding of religious first-person narratives in the eighteenth-century English-speaking world. Autobiographies as solidly typical as Methodist preacher Sampson Staniforth's *Arminian Magazine* serial or as distinctive as the poet William Cowper's *Memoir of madness* march as representatives alongside briefer records of oral narratives from the Cambuslang (Scotland) revival of 1742 and longer Moravian *Lebenslauf*. At its most thoughtful and persuasive, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative* connects eighteenth-century converts to one another and to their denominational contexts as it analyzes how subtle theological differences characterized narrative communities even as they produced parallel works in this recognizable genre. Not only Moravian and Methodist leaders disagreed over the respective roles of law and "stillness" in conversion, but those differences also appear in laypeople's narratives (162–69). Methodist laypeople and ministers understood differently whether or not their works constituted a "literary genre," but they anticipated the same emotional "direct experience of divine favour or disfavour" (157–58). Presbyterian converts owned with pride that they knew their orthodox Calvinism, as did Sarah Gilchrist, who understood "the objective ground in the finished work of Christ" as the basis for her salvation (213). Hindmarsh paints a clear, delicate picture of the inner and outer lives of eighteenth-century English-speaking Christians of all genders, education, and classes who experienced these moments and cycles of grace.

Despite this variety of conversion narratives, Hindmarsh's sources indicate that the subtitle and title of his book might more accurately have been reversed, for his evangelical focus both circumscribes and dilutes the actual scope of eighteenth-century spiritual autobiography. For example, Hindmarsh excises Quaker autobiographers, relegating Friends' writings to a review chapter on the seventeenth century (44–45). In addition, he omits first-person works, even among the prominently discussed Methodists, such as Joanna Turner's *Life* (1787), which was not merely conversion narrative, but an extended autobiography more like those of male Methodist preachers. However, Hindmarsh includes the Cambuslang revival narratives (edited ministers' transcripts of narrowly focused oral testimonies [196–98]) and personal writings unintended for public view, such as the "precocious" private diaries of John Ryland, founder of a religious society among teenagers at his dissenting school (308–9). Neither of these collections of sources can match the sustained theological exposition of a work such as *The Extraordinary Life and Christian Experience of Margaret Davidson* (1782), written by a devout Wesleyan autobiographer who seems to have been missed, perhaps because her narrative was published in Dublin.

Hindmarsh makes much of the idea that England was simultaneously the "leading edge of modernity" and the "trailing edge of Christendom" (32) to explain the rise of spiritual autobiography, assertions that could be easily challenged by historians of the wider Atlantic world, among others. He argues finally, and too briefly to be convincing, that these Christian first-person narratives provide a genuine alternative to the "secular individualist self" bequeathed by the eighteenth century. He hopes the "evangelical self" might

prove more impervious to postmodern critique, because the “gospel” understanding of conversion tempers discredited essentialism with self-transcendence (348–49). Yet Hindmarsh himself explains best the sensibilities of individual narrators, providing nuanced discussions in three chapters on Methodist writers, strong single-chapter case studies of Moravian, Anglican, and Baptist self-writings, and a careful overview of the seventeenth-century Puritan context of the conversion narrative. As he remarks of the Methodist laywoman Elizabeth Hinsome, whose emotions shine through a complete absence of punctuation, and her contemporaries of the early 1740s, “They had a keen sense that God had conferred his favour upon them in a direct, immediate way, beyond anything that they deserved, and as a result their letters are marked by a note of spontaneous joy” (133). Hindmarsh makes such joy intelligible, and it is for this sensitive interpretation of its chosen sources, rather than for the interpretive framework, that *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative* should be sought out.

CHRISTINA MARIE DEVLIN, *Montgomery College, Germantown.*

PETERS, KATE. *Print Culture and the Early Quakers*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 273 pp. \$75.00 (cloth).

With her book *Print Culture and the Early Quakers*, Kate Peters has given us something early modern and Quaker studies have been lacking for some time. Building on the seminal works in early modern print culture and Quaker history, Peters describes and analyzes the early Quakers’ use of print media for purposes both internal and external to their religious society. This dual focus is why this work makes such an important contribution. Peters both challenges conventional assumptions about some fundamental aspects of Quakerism and integrates Friends in the wider culture of early modern England.

As one would expect, Peters uses the volumes of printed materials Quakers produced, as well as manuscript sources, to elucidate how Friends used the publishing process to establish and settle their Society. Focusing tightly on the first decade of Quakerism, the 1650s, she describes how Friends constructed themselves as a Society through the publication and distribution of sermons, epistles, and other printed matter using an intricate and highly organized network of ministers. This description of the great degree of organization during their founding era is the first of several contributions Peters makes to our understanding of early Quakerism. She continues to emphasize a related point that runs contrary to a widespread misconception of Quakerism—that Friends were completely egalitarian or democratic in their ecclesiology. The distribution of print matter was intended to solidify the developing hierarchy that would lead to the establishment of the London Yearly Meeting in the next couple of decades. Firm control by a few leaders within the movement is what allowed Quakerism to survive rather than succumb to the radical elements inherent in the Doctrine of the Inner Light.

Another important point Peters makes to counter assumptions about Quaker egalitarianism and hierarchy is in her chapter on women and pamphleteering. Whereas historians have been wont to celebrate the novelty and supposed liberalism of Quaker female preaching, Peters argues that far from having complete latitude to express themselves, Quaker women were considered an unpredictable and potentially dangerous element of the meeting that must be

contained by the men if the movement were to survive. Therefore, although women did indeed write on behalf of the Quaker cause, they were not at all seen as advocates of any cause for women as such.

Peters discusses how the Quakers' internal struggle was bound up with their outward mission. This study makes an important argument about the role Friends played in the political culture of the Interregnum. Much of the scholarship on Quakerism takes Quaker claims of quietism at face value and treats the Quaker community as removed from the larger society. Although most scholars recognize that Friends were more aggressive during their early years than they would later become, the usual claims have been that they were uninterested in politics and had little or no effect on the developments of the period. Peters challenges the claim that Quakers were little more than a "radical remnant of a failed revolution" (5) and offers a new interpretation that places them in the thick of both the burgeoning print culture and the political turmoil. She highlights the powerful compulsion early Quakers felt to convince others of the Truth that drove them into politics and explains that their mission necessitated religious toleration, which in turn required widespread political participation to secure. Further, in order to proselytize effectively, they had to control their public image. Thus Friends published to give the impression of unity even as they were struggling to attain it. Peters shows us how their complex system of print distribution at the local level amounted to a strategic national propaganda campaign.

One area Peters might have expanded on is the Quakers' editorial process. We know that every publication issued under the auspices of the Society was thoroughly vetted by elders and ministers to ensure the unity of message. But what of reprints? One wonders what sort of evolutions the documents made in subsequent editions. Considering that she is dealing only with the Society's earliest years, however, perhaps this question is beyond the purview of her study. A continuation of her work might therefore reveal interesting evolutions in Quakers' self-understanding and theology.

With her very readable work, Peters gives us a detailed and new understanding of why Quakers were seen as such a threat by their contemporaries and why they were the only radical sect not just to survive the Interregnum, but to flourish well beyond. This book is recommended as a valuable addition to both the scholarship and the classroom.

JANE E. CALVERT, *St. Mary's College of Maryland*.

DOLLAR, KENT. *Soldiers of the Cross: Confederate Soldier Christians and the Impact of the War on Their Faith*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005. xix+253 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).

A number of books and articles have emerged in the past decade that examine the place of religion in the Civil War and, in particular, the Confederacy. Most show the way religion either supported or undermined the Confederate cause and troop morale. *Soldiers of the Cross* asks new questions about the place of religion in the Civil War South: How did the war affect the faith of Christian soldiers, whether they were soldiers who entered the conflict with deeply held beliefs or converts from one of the many revivals that swept through the Confederate armies? Did Christian soldiers fall prey to the temptations of camp

life or did their faith endure? Finally, what sort of role did religion play in the lives of these Christian soldiers after the war?

Kent Dollar goes about answering these questions by looking at the journals and letters of nine soldiers: three Methodists, two Episcopalians, two Presbyterians, one Baptist, and one Catholic. Three of these men, William N. Pendleton (a minister), William Nugent, and Alfred Taylor were longtime converts in good standing with their denominations at the onset of the conflict. Three, Edward Guerrant, Felix Poche, and Hiram Holt, are labeled "spiritual neophytes," men who professed religion in the late antebellum period but clearly did not have a long history in the church. Finally, three of the men converted to Christianity during the war. Dollar wants to know what issues, events, and concerns prompted religious expressions in their writing and what language they used to express their religious convictions. Finally, did they exhibit a form of spiritual maturity as the war progressed and in the postwar years?

Dollar attacks the questions in systematic fashion. After providing a brief biographical sketch of each soldier before the war and their uniform belief that God favored the Southern cause, Dollar targets a variety of practices, attitudes, and beliefs that reveal something about their religious convictions. Each soldier observed and commented on the immorality of camp life with a mix of disdain and reprobation. Virtually all denounced the devilish deceptions of drinking, card playing, swearing, and Sabbath breaking and even the rampant spread of venereal disease. Moreover, as protection against these temptations, each soldier sought opportunities to worship or practiced private devotions. Wartime converts Giles Cooke, Robert Moore, and Alexander Barclay all became regular participants in army religious services. Dollar also observes that answered prayers played a key role in girding their faith, especially prayers for safety during battle but also for family and friends. Finally, as the war dragged on, these soldiers expressed increasing interest in the spiritual world. Their diaries and letters show increased reflection on the transitory nature of life and the promised reunion in heaven with family and other believers. Confederate defeat did not undermine their faith. Instead, these fighting men turned to Providence, that catchall of nineteenth-century doctrines that more often mimicked stoic ideals than classical Christian convictions, to reconcile their once surefire professions of victory into comforting news of divine chastisement.

Dollar's study provides helpful new information but leaves a number of unanswered questions. The nine men selected do not represent the makeup of denominations in the South. There were far more Baptists at the start of the war than either Episcopalians or Presbyterians and, while having a Catholic in the mix is noteworthy, a single voice does not say much about the tradition. Moreover, the men chosen for this study illustrate a positive relationship between the war and faith. But how representative are these men? How many Christians enlisted only to find themselves overwhelmed by the temptations of camp life? How many wartime converts followed the patterns of Cooke, Moore, and Barclay, faithfully attending services till the bitter end? What this study does show is that some Christian soldiers engaged in regular religious practices and embraced the standards of piety sanctioned by their respective churches. If that alone is the definition of a maturing faith, they all possessed it. But can piety or spiritual maturity be so readily divorced from concrete historical realities, whether political, economic, or racial? Should Pendleton's unreconstructed attitudes toward blacks and unrepentant contempt for the Union be

considered signs of maturing faith? In the end, working with the definitions of maturity he provides, Dollar concludes that the war led all nine soldiers toward “steadfastness in their religious convictions . . . and devotion to God” (224).

KURT O. BERENDS, *University of Notre Dame*.

GREEN, ROGER J. *The Life and Ministry of William Booth: Founder of the Salvation Army*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005. xvi+287 pp. \$11.00 (paper).

William Booth, the leading figure behind the establishment of the Salvation Army, has been the subject of countless biographies over the years, varying from the short and popular to the lengthy and scholarly. Roger Green, who has devoted his academic career to the study of the Salvation Army, is well aware of this fact, but he believes that it is possible to shed additional light on this famous Victorian evangelist and social reformer. First and foremost, Green argues that more can be learned about Booth's relationship to Methodism, since previous biographies of the Army's founder have often failed to appreciate the Wesleyan roots of his theological vision. Booth may not have been a trained theologian, but the doctrinal emphases of Wesleyanism guided his life and ministry long after he had left the Methodist fold. While *The Life and Ministry of William Booth* is concerned primarily with establishing this thesis, it also explores how Booth's love for both the Salvation Army and authority led him to become estranged from three of his own children in later life. These tragic familial episodes forcefully demonstrate that he had his weaknesses, but this book seeks to remind us that God often uses people in spite of their human imperfections. Green, a lifelong member of the Salvation Army, readily confesses his great admiration for the life and legacy of Booth, but he wants to portray him “for the man he was, not a perfect stained glass window figure or saint” (2).

There can be little doubt that Booth's authoritarian style of leadership helped to alienate him from three of his own children—Ballington, Catherine, and Herbert—and Green's book provides a succinct account of their departures from the Salvation Army between 1896 and 1902. Booth expected obedience from the officers (clergy) and soldiers (laity) he commanded, including his own sons and daughters, and those who challenged his authority were viewed as disloyal to the organization he loved so fervently. Green offers a candid assessment of Booth's autocratic nature and the effects it had on his own family, but the picture he paints is not unfamiliar to anyone who has read the earlier accounts of the Salvation Army leader's life. The real significance of Green's book lies elsewhere, specifically in its effort to place Booth squarely within the historical and theological context of Methodism. Booth may have formally left the Wesleyan tradition in 1862, but he continued to bear its influence in numerous ways. Methodism not only left its imprint on his styles of leadership and preaching but also shaped his love for the poor and his passion for holiness. Here especially Green's volume goes well beyond the biographies by Harold Begbie and Roy Hattersley, which failed to appreciate the Wesleyan theology that inspired Booth throughout his life.

Green should be commended for deepening our understanding of Booth's ties to Methodism, but his biography could have been improved in several respects. First of all, even if we accept that Methodism was the leading influ-

ence upon the Salvation Army's founder, we should not ignore the other theological currents that enriched his life and ministry. It is surprising, for example, how little space Green devotes to the American revivalist Charles Grandison Finney. Finney was, of course, Presbyterian and Congregationalist in background, but his thinking clearly lay behind Booth's strategy of adapting the gospel to local cultures, both at home and in the mission field. Adaptation was one of the Salvation Army's distinctive features and often served to distance Salvationists from their more respectable Methodist cousins. Second, one might question Green's claim that Booth "can be understood only by seeing him as someone driven by a religious impulse to save the world from . . . its own sin and well-deserved misery" (103). Booth was never guided simply by theological impulses; he was also driven by a Victorian desire to better his circumstances and become successful in the world's eyes. His motives were always a mixture of theology and ego, a combination that is surely reflected in many prominent religious leaders. Third, while Green's book draws upon a wealth of Salvationist material, he could have made far more use of non-Salvationist sources, including the Methodist press, which often referred, both positively and negatively, to Booth and his army. These and other limitations ultimately make Green's account of Booth less than fully satisfying. Nevertheless, this biography should be welcomed for helping to reveal the Methodist side of a complex and remarkable man.

ANDREW MARK EASON, *University of Calgary*.

KENNEY, JOHN PETER. *The Mysticism of Saint Augustine: Rereading the Confessions*. New York: Routledge, 2005, xiii+160 pp. \$29.95 (paper).

There is urgency in John Peter Kenney's effort to dismantle the "interpretive scaffolding" that has been thrown up around the famous contemplative episodes in the *Confessions*. There is sense in it too. One must agree that the nebulous category of "mystical," rendered purely subjective and psychological by the moderns, has come to hinder rather than help interpretation. Likewise, more than a few readers of Augustine must feel the same weariness with claims to identify theological fiction or "interpretation" and strip it away from true biography. Kenney insists that such approaches fall short, both because they do not find in Augustine's text the kind of evidence that they require and, more important, because they leave out what is most worth seeking. As Kenney thinks, with these intellectual obstacles removed and close attention turned to Augustine's own "categories of reflection"—theological ones, primarily—one can view more clearly the "brocade" of his thought, which is "finely wrought" and which contributed to a "great peripety in Western culture" (148). How does the pattern of this rich cloth appear? Kenney argues that the overarching program of the *Confessions* is the presentation of a subtle and deeply Christian "account of contemplation" (x) meant to compensate for the shortcomings of the Neoplatonic doctrines and practices. He puts much care into describing the details.

In a book centered on contemplation, the practical elements of Augustine's account receive a solid exegesis, as do its ontological and theological underpinnings. Kenney considers how Augustine sees contemplative vision itself as vitally connected to a complex of activities and realities, including meditation upon Scripture, recollection of the past, confession of failings, concentration on things hoped for and believed. The discussion impresses not only as cogent

but also as offering a convincing description of the thematic unity that binds together the earlier and later books of the *Confessions*—an achievement that has eluded many. Augustine's broad practice contrasts with the narrower approach of Plotinus, though Kenney draws the contrast between the two thinkers even more strongly elsewhere. He makes a good case that, precisely in their respective accounts of contemplation, they reveal divergent notions of God and the soul. For example, while Plotinian contemplation brings about a calm awareness of being seamlessly and eternally grounded in the One, Augustinian contemplation provokes an anxious recognition of the vast gulf separating the fallen soul and the Creator. The very notion of divine presence takes on distinct forms in the two thinkers. Contrary to common assertions, Augustine does not mirror the theological thought of Plotinus.

Kenney does not focus with the same intensity upon the epistemological aspects of contemplation. A certain lack of consistency and precision in terminology mars the analysis. Neoplatonic contemplation is alternately "natural knowledge," a "cognitive grasp," or something "only visionary," while Christian contemplation offers a "higher mode of spiritual knowledge," a comprehension of "the eternal thoughts of God," or "spiritual truths" (61, 69, 72, 75, 80). Nor are the conclusions reached adequately supported in light of their boldness. Augustine supposedly views his contemplative experience at Ostia as a grace-given "act of revelation in the strongest sense" (120) of "the inner life of God" (123). Moreover, his description of it grants Christians in general the capacity for "immediate knowledge of the divine" (86). Kenney pushes too hard on a few phrases (e.g., "so too eternal life is of the quality of that moment of understanding after which we sighed"; Augustine, *Confessions* 9.10.25) and then connects them, in a way that Augustine never does, with the supernatural vision attributed by Augustine elsewhere to St. Paul and Moses (see 136). Various things in Augustine's works offer challenge. In the *De Trinitate*, a work called by Kenney "the theoretic completion . . . of Ostia" (136), Augustine does not come across as one who has received, or hopes to receive, a revelation of God's "inner life" though contemplation. Rather, he defers such vision to the next life (*De Trinitate* 15.23.44), acknowledging that "I know what I cannot do" (15.27.50). Perhaps a case can be made that Augustine collapses revelation and Christian contemplation, on an epistemological level, into one, but it has not been made here.

These issues aside, one is deeply impressed by how much has been accomplished. Students and scholars alike will be rewarded by Kenney's stimulating and compelling analyses, his clarity of style, and his capacious approach to the issues at hand. This is a fine performance and a welcome contribution.

JOSHUA DAVIES, *University of Miami*.

WITHERINGTON, BEN. *The Problem with Evangelical Theology: Testing the Exegetical Foundations of Calvinism, Dispensationalism, and Wesleyanism*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005. xi+294 pp. \$29.95 (paper).

The title of Ben Witherington's book refers to the problem (singular!) of evangelical theology. But in actual fact, the book refers to numerous exegetical issues, leading to a number of theological problems within Calvinism, Dispensationalism, and Wesleyanism. With regard to Calvinism, Witherington is concerned about individualism and determinism, which he highlights in connection with limited atonement, imputation of Christ's righteousness, perseverance of the

saints, as well as Reformed views of the role of the Mosaic Law and individual election from eternity. As to Dispensationalism—of which Witherington is more critical than of the other two positions—he rejects its systematic ahistoricism, which he locates in the literalist reading of prophetic literature, in the notion of the “rapture” and in the view that there are two peoples of God (Israel and the church). When it comes to Witherington’s own Wesleyan tradition, he opposes the normative role of experience, paying particular attention to what he regards as two problem areas: the notion of prevenient grace and perfectionism.

Despite the plethora of theological and exegetical issues presented, Witherington remains true to the title of his book. There is one root problem common to these traditions: they have particular distinctives setting them apart. It is precisely in their distinctives that, according to Witherington, they cannot sustain their positions exegetically: “The point I am making is just this—all these Evangelical theological systems *in their distinctives* are only loosely tethered to detailed exegesis of particular texts (6; cf. 167, 173). Not only is there just this one problem that Witherington believes to be common to the three evangelical traditions, but there also is just one issue that makes it difficult for evangelicalism to deal with its problem: evangelicals are largely “basically illiterate or semiliterate” (ix), so that the lack of biblical foundations for these distinctives goes undetected.

One of the finest points of the book is the author’s desire to return to the great tradition of the church fathers. He opens with a quotation from Robert Wilken’s stellar publication *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), and on many occasions Witherington rightly appeals to the biblical exegesis of the church fathers to make the point that the distinctives of later evangelical exegetes are out of line with earlier views. At the same time, this is where I must voice my most serious reservation: unlike the church fathers, Witherington appears to want a neutral, value-free form of exegesis, unencumbered by tradition or theological considerations (191). He limits the meaning of Scripture to that of the secondary authors’ own intent (102), and as a result he does not do justice to his own injunction that exegesis be done in the companionship of the church and the broader tradition (246, 252–53). Aren’t the divisions among the evangelical traditions at least in part traceable to an overconfidence of attaining the right meaning of the text? Precisely for a book exposing the problem of the distinctives of evangelical traditions, careful attention to the hermeneutical issues involved, as well as a return to theological exegesis governed by the rule of faith and as practiced by the church fathers, would seem indispensable. One cannot appeal to common patristic understandings of biblical texts without accepting the fathers’ theological premises informing their exegesis.

Witherington, professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary, draws on many years of scholarship, presenting a book that reads well, deals with the various issues equitably, and comes to conclusions that result from careful exegetical work. Despite the author’s fear that his strident disagreements may alienate some readers, the tone of the book is generally charitable. (There are a few exceptions, such as the comment about Reformed election theology, which is “even more skewed” than its view of the law [57], and the comment that it would be “hard to describe how many things are wrong” with J. M. Gundry Volf’s understanding of perseverance [64].) The author also fairly represents the views that he wants to refute. (Again, one quibble: Witherington does not describe unconditional election adequately [5, 62]: tradi-

tional Arminians held to individual election from eternity without believing it to be unconditional and without accepting perseverance of the saints as a necessary corollary.) On many of the points that the author raises throughout this book, I find myself either in agreement or at least genuinely addressed. It is largely accessible to the educated layperson and will challenge evangelicals to focus on their common catholic tradition.

HANS BOERSMA, *Regent College*.

CHESTER, MICHAEL A. *Divine Pathos and Human Being: The Theology of Abraham Joshua Heschel*. Portland, OR: Mitchell, 2005. xi+228 pp. \$54.95 (cloth); \$29.95 (paper).

As many comparative philosophers of religion have seen, it is notoriously difficult to remove the lenses of one's own culture in order to apprehend another worldview accurately, that is, in its own terms. For that reason, the English Christian Michael A. Chester deserves high commendation for his warm tribute to a Jewish theologian, Abraham Joshua Heschel. Of his four chapters, the most indisputably successful are the first—a forty-page biography—and the last, which focuses on Heschel's impact, particularly on Christians, even while eliciting some ambivalence from Jewish contemporaries.

Chester's other two chapters confront the substance of Heschel's achievement from the standpoints of methodological form and intellectual content. The worst that can be said of them is that they provide a competent and readable review of their subject matters, helpful to a new student of Heschel. On the other hand, it is here that the problematic of intercultural understanding becomes evident. As Raimon Panikkar, among others, often insists, comprehension is attained only when one truly "stands under" the spiritual perspective of "the other."

Only when close scrutiny fathoms the essentially different bases of Judaism and Christianity do the details of each worldview assume their inexorable places. An allegory conveys Judaism's foundation, permeating Heschel's work: Imagine you own a small, empty room to which you possess the only key. One day you leave it locked, returning a few minutes later to discover a chair. The thought that must needs occur to you with an immediacy undercutting any demand for syllogistic exercise is some variant of "Who put the chair there and how did they do it?" We know with preconceptual certainty that inanimate objects do not move themselves; only a "who," an agent, can achieve this. To account for that chair being in the room, the agent must have been endowed with will, intelligence, the power of action, and freedom—four attributes that define the meaning of "who": personhood. A person must somehow have acted in order for something to be in the room—an invincible fact whether the object be a pebble, a chair, or a computer.

As the historian of Israelite religion Yehezkel Kaufmann notes, only Judaism grasps—not just conceptually but existentially—the possibility, indeed the parsimonious probability, of *nothing* being the only reality. It sees the fundamental question as, Why is there something and not nothing? For ancient Israel, the entire universe, including all contents and structures, was "the chair in the empty room"—not a given to be taken for granted but rather a wondrous surprise, posing, as Heschel insists, an imperative question: "Who put it here?" And, once again, the only possible, prelogical answer is: Someone. A very great

Someone Whom we human persons must somehow resemble by virtue of our very capacity to intuit that Someone's reality. This insight, rather than personified archaic deities, is the spiritual source of "personal God" in Abrahamic monotheism. Monotheist personalism arises not as mythic antecedent of reason but at the end of reason's tether.

And this is why action is the primary perspective in which Judaism envisions persons, not only for Heschel—as Chester emphasizes—but throughout Judaic thought from "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"; that is, first of all, Someone must have put it here. Chester struggles in chapter 2 with whether Heschel's stance is poetry, rhetoric, philosophy, or theology. He endeavors to compress Heschel into various molds, for example, phenomenology, made plausible by Heschel's education toward a doctorate from what is now Humboldt University in Berlin. Chester agonizes over questions arising not in the Hebrew but the Greek tradition that dominated medieval thought in Judaism as well as Christianity, notably, the issue of impassibility versus passibility with respect to God. How can God be both changeless, which Job as well as medieval Jewish philosophers affirm him to be, and yet changeable, which he must somehow also be in order to have responsive relationship with human persons as portrayed in Scripture?

The answer, which Heschel himself groped to articulate in notions such as "depth theology," is clarified in his great work *The Prophets*: to grasp the reality of divine transcendence is to grasp the limitations of creaturely reason—for our reason too was "put here." One line of inquiry leads to the conclusion that God is changeless, another to the conviction that God must be changeable, endowed with "divine pathos," correctly identified by Chester as Heschel's most influential contribution to contemporary theology. No doubt these two lines of thought rationally contradict. But the presuppositional premise of all Heschel's work is that this is not a problem. Why? Because creaturely reason has inherent limits that it must concede, despite any hubristic yearning to assert human reason's authority. The creature can but humbly acknowledge its incapacity to fully understand the Creator.

Heschel might say that, given that there is something rather than nothing, it is pragmatically reasonable to suppose a purposeful Someone put it here, whatever the cavils of Hellenic formal rationality. And then the issue of why such a great Person would have put the world here must be raised. The Talmud responds with a question: "What is a king without subjects, a father without children?" No matter how "absolute," in other words, God cannot exercise any personal potentials absent other persons with whom to relate—and love: hence human creation "in the image of God" and the title of Heschel's magisterial "God in Search of Man." All this implies Heschel's project cannot be compressed into any of the categories of Chester's chapter 2, all deriving from the Greek mind-set. It is no accident that Judaism prefers to characterize its intellectual enterprise as "religious thought." For what Heschel does, in his recovery of Israel's scriptural consciousness, is to offer an expression of how reality is apprehended by one truly fathoming that the Creator transcends the reach of human reason—which thus can drop all "theological" anxieties.

Chester summarizes Heschel's achievement without fully probing it—with no detriment to his scholarly credentials. His "failing" is simply the measure of Christianity's Greek impetus, entirely distinct from Israel's. Although Creation is, of course, a Christian and also an Islamic dogma, the actual beginning point for Christianity is Logos, ideal form, rational order. And its most characteristic

argument for God is not Creation's sheer existence but its rational order—the argument from design. Essentially, Christianity begins in a “pagan” Hellenic manner by taking what is in the room for granted and examining its structure. To his credit, Chester nonetheless found himself drawn to the profundity of a source worldview that speaks deeply to Christianity, paying personal, heartfelt tribute to a most eloquent spokesperson for historical Judaism.

CHARLES E. VERNOFF, *Cornell College*.

SHARMA, ARVIND. *To the Things Themselves: Essays on the Discourse and Practice of the Phenomenology of Religion*. Religion and Reason, vol. 39. New York: De Gruyter, 2001. xxi+311 pp. \$74.00 (cloth).

Arvind Sharma attempts to trace the genealogy and the development of phenomenology of religion, to articulate its method and practice, and to defend it against detractors. He argues that the phenomenology of religion is in the lineage of the philosophical phenomenology that began with Immanuel Kant, that was reformulated by G. W. F. Hegel, and that found its high point with Edmund Husserl. However, while the phenomenology of religion is in the lineage of philosophical phenomenology, that lineage is not, Sharma argues, direct. The phenomenology of religion employs the methodological apparatus of the *epoché* and of eidetic analysis advanced by Husserl, but they are “expounded in a manner in which they come to bear a family resemblance with but are not identical with their Husserlian connotations” (71). Broadly speaking, the *epoché* functions in the phenomenology of religion to bracket consideration of everything but the subjective, religious experience of the practitioner. The phenomenology of religion employs eidetic analysis to locate general structures within and across religions. Thus, in a strangely compelling argument, Sharma suggests that the phenomenology of religion is a sort of first or second cousin to Husserlian phenomenology.

Methodologically speaking, then, the phenomenology of religion is principally concerned with the experience of the religious devotee, what Sharma designates the “insider perspective.” Those who adopt this approach seek “to make the understanding of the believer, of what he or she is involved in, part and parcel of *their* understanding of him or her. His or her understanding is prior to our understanding of his or her understanding” (169). In other words, the privileging of the insider's perspective entails the assumption that the insider is correct about his or her experience (even if he or she might be incorrect about the objective circumstances of that experience). As such, the phenomenology of religion strives to be value free and antireductionistic in its approach; the intended object of religious experience is the divine, that which makes religious experience “religious” as opposed to some other kind of experience. Any approach that reduces religious experience to some other factor, for example, sociological processess or psychological drives, or that judges such experiences against an external scale of values must be viewed as foreign to the phenomenological approach.

The outcome of the phenomenological approach is the location of basic, foundational structures that determine the religious. Once located, these structures mark out the “essential nature” of the religious. Because the phenomenological approach is concerned chiefly with essential structures, Sharma argues that it is best suited for comparative endeavors. While it can be used at

the microlevel of discrete manifestations and traditions, the phenomenology of religion is most useful at the meso- and macrolevel of transreligious, transcultural phenomena. In sum, the phenomenology of religion is a comparative methodological approach that focuses, in a nonjudgmental and nonreductionist manner, on the religious experiences of adherents in hopes of locating essential structures that ground the religious as such.

It is difficult to assess Sharma's success in defending the phenomenology of religion from its detractors. Those who take an "apologetic" approach, that is, those who engage the study of religion in order to defend a particular tradition, will likely not be convinced by his arguments for insider perspective, or that openness and understanding are more appropriate goals in the study of religion than confirmation of one's own beliefs. Nor will those who take a social scientific approach likely be swayed by his claims that the adherent's own account of his experience offers the best perspective on his or her religion, or that the religious is something *sui generis*, distinct from other socio-cultural phenomena. Social scientists will find Sharma's formulation of the phenomenology of religion, at best, a useful methodological moment within a more critical analysis of religious ideologies.

Those already engaged in or already sympathetic to the phenomenological approach will find the volume refreshing. Sharma is largely successful, in this reader's assessment, in providing some discipline to what often seems a hodge-podge, impressionistic comparativism. He shows that there is some method behind the apparent madness. The essays in the book perform a valuable service for those who seek a more intentional phenomenological approach.

W. DAVID HALL, *Centre College*.

COTTINGHAM, JOHN. *The Spiritual Dimension: Religion, Philosophy, and Human Value*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xii+186 pp. \$70.00 (cloth); \$27.00 (paper).

It is a shame that some philosophers of religion still need to hear that a religion involves not merely a set of propositions to be affirmed but also a way of life to be followed. Those who participate in a religion typically aim not solely for intellectual enlightenment but also for spiritual growth, with all of the ethical and psychological aspects that attend the process of developing the whole person. Approaches that understand religion as simply a set of beliefs distort it. Against such views, John Cottingham argues that "it is in the very nature of religious understanding that it characteristically stems from practical involvement rather than from intellectual analysis" (6). He calls this view "the primacy of praxis" (5), and in this accessible book he traces the implications of this view for philosophical approaches to religion.

Cottingham holds that, given the primacy of praxis, religions should be understood in the first place as programs for spiritual development, as paths for self-transformation, as ascesis. He then argues for what one might call a more holistic philosophical approach to the study of religions. This "humane" approach (ix) allies traditional issues in philosophy of religion (such as the problem of evil, the nature of religious language, and the status of metaphysics) with moral philosophy (in order to trace the way that a religious worldview is integrally bound up with certain ethical commitments) and also, surprisingly, with psychoanalytic approaches (in order to trace the way that spiritual disci-

plines involve exercises in self-understanding and healing). Despite the centrality Cottingham gives to praxis, he does not ignore the cognitive aspects of religion or even the metaphysical aspects, and so he relativizes but does not exclude the traditional interests of analytic philosophers of religion.

Although the concerns, the vocabulary, and the examples in this book are almost exclusively Christian, the focus by a philosopher on religion as a lived practice is welcome. Such a focus opens possibilities for investigating aspects of religion often ignored by traditional philosophers of religion, for example, religious emotions as modes of receptivity or religious disciplines as forms of inquiry. It would be good to see future philosophers of religion follow this lead.

Unfortunately, however, Cottingham limits the usefulness of his approach by treating the object of religious belief as a reality "behind" or "beyond" all space and time, beyond human experience, and even beyond comprehension (e.g., 48, 103–4). Given this understanding of religious belief, there is little that one can do philosophically to critique it or to support it.

In a parallel move, Cottingham argues that since the route to religious belief is practice, not philosophical argument, problems can be resolved by focusing on the practical. But though he is right that religious praxis is temporally, heuristically, psychologically, and morally prior to metaphysical theories (150–51), philosophical reflection on religious practice cannot be replaced by the practice itself. This seems especially clear in Cottingham's chapter on the problem of religious diversity and conflicting truth claims. Cottingham critiques John Hick's Kantian approach to religious diversity by appealing to mystical practice: "The closer we draw, in short, to the ineffable reality that is God, the more we abstract from the plethora of potentially conflicting accounts in different traditions" (160). This appeal to the apophatic (which is all the rage in contemporary religious thought, despite Cottingham's complaint that analytic philosophers dismiss it [159]) raises a host of traditional problems about how an allegedly inconceivable reality can be thought. But these problems can be overcome, Cottingham says, since Christ, as a way of understanding God in human terms, provides a transition between the apophatic and the cataphatic, the mystical and the liturgical, "an intersection point between the vertical and the horizontal . . . symbolized in a unique way by the central image of the Cross" (162). At this point, a program that began as a model for an inclusive form of philosophy of religion seems to take refuge in Christian mysteries. Cottingham denies that he is recommending that theology cloak its confusions in devotion (163 n. 33), but how his proposals differ from that is not clear.

This book covers a great deal of territory quickly, and as a consequence several arguments are merely sketched. But, in short, the book aims for a philosophy of religion that takes embodied aspects seriously even while retaining traditional interest in the cognitive. Though it embraces an unhelpful understanding of metaphysics, it points the way to a balanced or more inclusive form of philosophy of religion.

KEVIN SCHILBRACK, *Wesleyan College*.

RASMUSSEN, JOEL D. S. *Between Irony and Witness: Kierkegaard's Poetics of Faith, Hope, and Love*. New York: T&T Clark, 2005. 198 pp. \$100.00 (cloth).

Given Søren Kierkegaard's penchant for signing pseudonyms to his texts—often at the last moment before printing—as well as his love of indirect com-

munication, reading his texts is never a straightforward proposition, particularly since the advent of deconstructive or literary approaches to Kierkegaard. Roger Poole, Joakim Garff, and Louis Mackey (et al.) have each in their own way problematized the notion that we may read the Kierkegaardian texts straightforwardly for their theological content or any authorial intention, whatever the protestations of the texts themselves. Others, notably Arnold Come, have read Kierkegaard rather prosaically to be primarily a theologian, not a poet, and have on that basis ignored or downplayed the texts' literary performance. Joel Rasmussen's genius is to approach Kierkegaard's work in terms of a "Christomorphic poetics" (2), which overcomes the theology versus literature binary that has dominated many interpretations of Kierkegaard's writings. The hermeneutical lens for Rasmussen's constructive reading of Kierkegaard, what he refers to as "the Christo-poetical heart of the authorship" (4), is God's initiative in Christ. Kierkegaard, according to Rasmussen, understands Jesus's incarnation as the paradigmatic poetic act, which reconciles the incommensurability of human possibilities expressed in the gap between the Ideal (Christ) and sinful human actuality and reveals God to be the supreme, divine poet (3, 4, 172). It follows, then, that the Romantic notion of "living poetically," whose poetic reconciliation to actuality occurs imaginatively through the aesthetic use of irony, is now understood Christianly in terms of imitating God's incarnational act through an (ironic) in/direct act of "witnessing to the truth" (57–58, 170–74). Rasmussen's surprising conclusion is that Kierkegaard's category of "witnessing to the truth" ultimately is an aesthetic category, that "witnessing for the truth" is a form of "living poetically" (174). The (true) reconciliation of Kierkegaard's "Christomorphic poetics" sublates the Romantic use of aesthetic irony and achieves an existential retrieval of self that is expressed theologically in terms of the classical Christian (biblical) virtues of faith, hope, and love (57, 174). It is right here in the middle, between irony and witness, we are told, that Kierkegaard conceives his own authorship (174).

Though Rasmussen never explicitly spells out the connection to reading texts, he assumes that his Christo-poetic reading entails that the literary qualities of Kierkegaard's works do not thereby negate their ability to speak theologically. Instead we land somewhere in the orbit of Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics of distantiation, and we find that the variety of Kierkegaardian texts and pseudonyms creates a rich and varied "textual world" that resists any one definitive interpretation, which must be read in terms of its "intertextuality" (9). Rasmussen, therefore, offers us a postcritical way to read Kierkegaard and concludes that Kierkegaard's writings "create a dialectical universe of meaning that is best reconstructed in terms of Christomorphic poetics" (8).

Perhaps the most important contribution, though, of Rasmussen's work in *Between Irony and Witness* is that he convincingly demonstrates the relevance of Romantic aesthetics, particularly of Friedrich Schlegel's *Lucinde* and the Romantic ideal of "living poetically," to Kierkegaard's authorship. Rasmussen's justifiable concern is that Kierkegaard is interpreted too often in light of his relationship to G. W. F. Hegel and German idealism alone, rather than against the backdrop of early German Romantic aesthetics (16). Rasmussen's focus on Kierkegaard's poetics is meant to address this concern, and, while one wonders whether he has overcorrected the balance, Rasmussen turns out a powerful reading of the Kierkegaardian corpus that stays close to the texts and helpfully illumines Kierkegaard's significance to the interface of theology and aesthetics. Particularly helpful in this regard is Rasmussen's careful analysis of Kierke-

gaard's creative reappropriation of Poul Møller's critique of the Romantic ideal of living poetically. Kierkegaard, Rasmussen explains, supersedes Møller's traditionalist Christian alternative to Romantic literary theory and argues that a true reconciliation cannot occur within the imagination alone (as with both Romantic and Møller's poetics) but must be fulfilled in concrete actuality (10). In the end, Rasmussen's reading suggests that Kierkegaard's Christomorphic poetics opens up new avenues to explore the importance of aesthetics to theology that steer a *via media* between the Charybdis of theological relativism on one side and the Scylla of fundamentalist absolutism on the other. *Between Irony and Witness* is a welcome addition to the burgeoning literature on Kierkegaard and should provide the basis for many other fruitful theological studies of Kierkegaard, as it has left much room to extend its analyses.

MYRON BRADLEY PENNER, *Prairie College*.

HENRY, MICHEL. *I Am the Truth: Toward a Philosophy of Christianity*. Translated by Susan Emanuel. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002. 304 pp. \$65.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

Michel Henry's philosophy of Christianity at some moments resonates with identifiable Christian claims and at others is radically revisionist if not subversive of Christian thought, all the while joining, if not propelling, the phenomenological turn toward theology. Henry's pervasive use of Scripture gives the impression that his intention is to be true to the spirit of Christian tradition, even though there lingers the question of his hermeneutical method. The question is whether he affirms a revelatory force of the text, or whether the text becomes subordinate in its function to ground his philosophical claims. With frequent scriptural reference Henry draws together phenomenology, a doctrine of revelation, and a theory of intersubjectivity as he approaches a philosophy of Christianity and simultaneously refutes the god of the philosophers. His philosophical method is less ambiguous: philosophy is no handmaiden used to validate Christian claims, for Christianity is inherently philosophical, at least phenomenologically understood. The soteriological promise of Christianity is "caught up" in a phenomenology, since it requires making God manifest in the world. The fundamental task of phenomenology is to give an account of the real; Christianity, he argues, accomplishes precisely this task.

Recognizably Christian themes are thus recast in phenomenological terms. Henry points to the paradox of the simultaneous repulsion and draw between Christianity and the world. He distinguishes Christianity as foreign to the world's truth insofar as Christ's self-proclamations (e.g., the claim to pardon sins, resuscitate the dead) are deemed outrageous. Yet Christ's discourse remains incomprehensible because people do not understand their condition except in light of the world's truth. The Marxist claim against Christianity, namely, its so-called fleeing of reality to an imaginary place "beyond," turns out to be based on a misunderstanding. Christianity is flight from the world only when the world is deceived about reality. Far from turning human beings away, Christianity is rather the means of access to what is real. Indeed Christianity indicates the place where reality lies and leads us to it.

But Henry's phenomenology establishes that Christ cannot show himself to the world as Christ; human persons thus find themselves exterior to divine essence. The religious problem then is how persons are capable of finding

God again, a problem that Henry attempts to resolve by calling up Platonic recollection, the implications of which consequently preclude any necessity for divine manifestation understood as uniquely distinct from human life.

Henry claims the difference between human and divine essence is eliminated as soon as the identity as "Son of God" becomes constitutive of human self-understanding. "Son of God" means both original essence and also what persons can and must become. In either case, whether at the start or finish of human action, the divine-human distinction is blurred. Henry is in effect infusing the claim "I am the truth," a claim seemingly exclusive to Christ, into human self-understanding for those who remember that the essence of human beings and divine life is consubstantial.

Henry recognizes the problematic: "If man carries in himself Life's divine essence, is he not God himself or Christ? What is the difference between them?" (104). Does not the claim of consubstantial essence render the question of exteriority superfluous and closed off? All knowledge, including that gained by the hearing of Scripture, is always already recollection, a recognition that presupposes prior knowledge in us and is then merely rediscovery. But if revelation is recollection, in what sense does it count as revelation? It is difficult to discern whether Henry's anthropology or his Christology does too much phenomenological work.

It is not until Henry nears the end of his project that he adds a qualification that would make all the difference; however, it is a point on which he ultimately reneges. He finally acknowledges the Platonic basis for his reference to recognition according to which hearing Scripture becomes a mere rediscovery of a primitive knowledge. The rescue from heresy hinges on, he argues, the nature of such primitive knowledge. It is not I, the ego, who is capable of recognizing the Scripture is true; it is only the Word of Life in me. Here Henry borders on a claim of difference between divine life and the divine life within me, but he vacillates between them, and even more frequently conflates them.

Henry almost persuades us that Christ and the authors of the biblical text are themselves phenomenologists, or, at the very least, that Christianity, as its best expression, is at the heart of phenomenology. Henry's attempt to reconsider God as part of the phenomenal world is both the success and failure of his philosophy of Christianity. Henry approaches a phenomenological account of reality without secular presuppositions that would exclude theological understandings. And yet, in effect, his immanentist rendering of God as a phenomenon (by making human essence consubstantial with divine essence) does not challenge Husserlian phenomenology and its prohibition against transcendence, since Henry's philosophy is complicit with the prohibition. In the end, Henry's philosophy of Christianity may subvert both faith and philosophy. It is left to the reader to decide whether the subversion in either case is a productive transformation for the better.

ANDREA C. WHITE, *Chicago, Illinois.*

TALIAFERRO, CHARLES. *Evidence and Faith: Philosophy and Religion since the Seventeenth Century*. The Evolution of Modern Philosophy. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xii+457 pp. \$75.00 (cloth); \$29.99 (paper).

As a volume in the Evolution of Modern Philosophy series, Charles Taliaferro's *Evidence and Faith* surveys the field that he deems "one of the most fascinating

and profound"—philosophy of religion (1). He chronicles its development from René Descartes to the present, assigning full chapters first to the Cambridge Platonists, then to Descartes, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant. Further chapters deal with other elements of early modern philosophy, post-Kantian idealism and naturalism, pragmatism, continental and feminist philosophy of religion, positivism and criticism of it, Ludwig Wittgenstein, pluralism, and, finally, the most recent scholarship in the field. In fact, readers may find the title of the book misleading, as it deals less with the relation of evidence and faith (or any other single issue) than with the history of various philosophers in relation to religious belief and, to a lesser extent, religious morality. As such, there is no central thesis in the book other than a general commendation of philosophy of religion as "a place for constructive and critical, engaging philosophical work" (429), a claim that will not be difficult for scholars of religion to accept but that has generated considerable dispute within the field of philosophy ever since the Vienna Circle.

Aside from the occasional attempt to relate some of the strands of thought back to the Cambridge Platonists (a group whose contribution Taliaferro deems uniquely powerful, if not unique or altogether original, for orienting one's thought in the field), there is not even a narrative arc to tie together the history of these disparate thinkers and topics, and, what is more, the urge to mention nearly every thinker even remotely associated with the topic at hand tends to reduce the substance of some parts to the equivalent of an annotated bibliography. As such, the book functions chiefly as a reference guide, though quite a useful one for those needing a quick overview coupled with (usually) helpful footnotes referring to secondary sources.

If there is one guiding thread through the history, it is the attempt to justify this field of philosophy to its skeptics and thus to make religion a respectable topic of philosophical inquiry again. This effort issues in a pervasive attitude toward religion as primarily a matter of belief, which harkens back to Taliaferro's departure point historically, Descartes, who claimed that, as Taliaferro puts it, "religious faith needs justification through natural reason" (64). While Taliaferro includes discussion of many dissenting figures (Continental and feminist philosophy, Wittgenstein, etc.), much of the book offers an Enlightenment-style defense of natural reason as a way of understanding and assessing religion. For example, the substance of morality more often consists of secular values and civic virtues such as freedom and toleration rather than biblical love or devotion. Furthermore, the culminating examples of contemporary research in the field go, as he says, "back to the beginning" and deal with the "articulation, defense, and critique of theism" (398–99). So much for G. W. F. Hegel's broadening of philosophy of religion so that it "appreciates that religion is more than a matter of embracing a hypothesis or science" (273).

While there is no unifying narrative or focal argument of the book as a whole, there are a number of arguments—often quite compelling—presented in some of the individual sections, for example, the treatment of Cartesian dualism, the discussion of Hume and the design argument, and the intermittent discussion of religious tradition. In the latter case, one may wish to get more intertextual dialogue rather than the treatment of Hegel, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Alasdair MacIntyre as discrete unities in compartmentalized sections. Some sections, though brief by necessity given the scope of the work, leave the reader yearning for more. In discussing Blaise Pascal, Taliaferro tantalizes the reader with "what may be called a philosophy of grace" in Pascal's

Pensées (103), but he drops the topic to deal with the textbook fare of the wager argument. The discussion of Ludwig Feuerbach and Karl Marx oddly precedes that of Hegel, and it treats the two as simply inimical to religion without exploring ways in which their work may lead creatively to prophetic reform from within a religious tradition. (To be fair, Taliaferro does note that Feuerbach's critique of transcendence "shows us a way to become reacquainted with the sensuous and aesthetic of this world" [264], but without mentioning any connection to realized eschatology. Likewise, he notes the possible "overlap" between Christianity and Marxism as attested by liberation theology, but the topic receives no more than passing acknowledgment.) Still, the book should prove useful for scholars as a reference work and for beginning students as an introduction to the field.

WILLIAM P. KIBLINGER, *Winthrop University*.

RYNHOLD, DANIEL. *Two Models of Jewish Philosophy: Justifying One's Practices*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. 262 pp.. \$95.00 (cloth).

Daniel Rynhold has written what will strike many readers as an oddity. He invokes philosophers from Aristotle to Richard Rorty in defense of such matter as thinking that Jewish priests must defile themselves in ritual impurity to care for the body of a close relative who has died but must not do so for a dead person who has nobody to bury him. Yet in this book Rynhold makes a valuable contribution to philosophy of religion. He wants us to think of Orthodox Judaism as a "practice" and argues for a rational nonpropositional basis for engaging in it. There are few people who could execute this enterprise with such impressive erudition in both contemporary philosophy and classical Jewish sources and with such a richness of argumentation as does Rynhold.

The story starts with a comparison between Maimonides and the rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (hereafter the "Rav," as he was known) on the rationale for the commandments of Judaism. Maimonides' rationales depend on historical circumstances and general principles of rationality. The Rav objects that Judaism must be autonomous in its self-understanding of its laws, though the Rav too, at least much of the time, rationalizes the laws in terms of the principles that the laws embody.

Rynhold, however, misses an important difference between the enterprises of Maimonides and the Rav. While Maimonides wishes to explain laws all the way down to the bottom, the Rav does not; he starts in the middle. He gives no rationale for why in the first place there should be priests, why there should be a category of "impurity," or why priests should not become impure. Starting from the middle, rather than from the bottom, makes it easier to demand "autonomy" for the rationalization of the commandments, since so much is simply being assumed.

Rynhold rejects the "priority of theory" of both Maimonides and the Rav, that is, justifying a practice by reference to the principles it reflects. Rynhold argues vigorously and extensively for the "priority of practice" in what he calls "non-discursive rationality" (175), which is irreducibly practical. Rynhold helps himself by the alleged fact that Judaism defines itself "primarily" in terms of the practice of Jewish law, and that allegedly Jews "predominantly" believe-in rather than believe-that (179). The idea is that the very engagement in a practice can give one a "reasoned confidence" in it (186). One becomes "experi-

entially convinced" that the practice is worthwhile and right; this does not justify propositions but actions (196).

Since Rynhold gives up on truth and propositional justification, it is hard to see what the fuss is all about. It is easy to give rational reasons for engaging in a practice, if truth is not an issue. Here is a list of just a few possibilities: This practice is fun. My doing this practice makes my mother happy. This practice creates a supportive community. Not engaging in this practice would cause me excessive guilt feelings.

Furthermore, Rynhold's discussion about rationalizing practice does not apply well to Judaism. Jewish practice cannot escape propositional content. That is because many commandments and correlative actions have intentional reference to alleged historical facts. A Jew is supposed to remember the Exodus from Egypt daily and to celebrate it in various holidays. If there was no Exodus, how could it be rational to remember it? A Jew must remember the unprovoked attack of Amalek on the Israelites in the desert. If there was no such attack, how could it be remembered? There are many more commandments in Jewish practice making reference to alleged facts. Liberal Judaism has accommodated Jewish practice to its belief that these historical events may not have occurred. But this option is not available for Orthodox Judaism, the Judaism of the Rav and, apparently, of the author himself. Rynhold's "priority of practice" can neither avoid nor justify the propositional bases of many of the commandments.

Finally, Judaism cannot stand upon the autonomy of its own internal rationale. It must dialogue with deeply held moral beliefs and practices. It is not enough for a practice to be "meaningful" and "worthwhile," or even "right," when that is understood, somehow, by the internal lights of the practice itself. It must also be decent and morally upright. It is for this reason that I am quite surprised that Rynhold does not consider moral objections to Orthodox Judaism, particularly *the* major contemporary moral critique: its treatment of women. I look forward to his engaging such issues with the same sophistication and philosophical richness that he exhibits in this book.

JEROME GELLMAN, *University of Notre Dame/Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.*

PETERSON, ANNA L. *Seeds of the Kingdom: Utopian Communities in the Americas.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. xvi+181 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).

The best comparative studies spark the imagination. Their authors are not content merely to note similarities or chart typologies of difference. Instead, they explore new combinations of belief and practice that might enrich both the communities under study and the larger human family. Description leads not to normative prescription, but to a free flowering of possibilities.

Seeds of the Kingdom is such a study. Anna Peterson explores two clusters of communities that have probably never before been directly compared: Amish farming communities in the United States and repopulated refugee villages in postwar El Salvador. Both traditions are "utopian" insofar as they represent small-scale, local attempts to embody the biblical reign of God. They merit the close attention of anyone who wishes to connect "local projects" to "large-scale social, economic, and environmental change" (3). Amish farmers and Salvadoran refugees, Peterson contends, have maintained a steadfast commitment to social justice and environmental sustainability, while countless other utopias

have "vanished without much impact beyond the contemporary and the local" (14). They have survived because they are "rooted in enduring cultural and religious traditions [and] firmly settled in particular places" (14). Yet their significance reaches beyond those places: "Their hopes are connected to ours. The experiences and values of these small communities, so distant from centers of power, offer vital resources for the necessary struggle to rethink and rebuild our own societies" (15).

Peterson blends this activist agenda with careful scholarship, offering details of everything from agricultural technology to the myriad acronyms that organize life in the Salvadoran "repopulations." Placing the Amish in the context of the Anabaptist tradition and the repopulations in the context of post-Vatican II progressive Catholicism, she also offers succinct overviews of both those religious traditions. More than many Christians, Anabaptists and progressive Catholics have preserved a vital connection to gospel utopianism, readily seeing themselves as a "microcosm of the reign of God" (4). But there is an important difference: while Anabaptists are content simply to be God's reign in microcosm, the natural law tradition allows Catholics to strive "to remake the larger society into a more Christian form" (117). Peterson's sympathy for the latter position is obvious, but she presents the Amish case in detail, suggesting that it may be a needed antidote to the Constantinian temptations of Catholicism.

Perhaps because the book sparked my own imagination, I often found myself wishing that Peterson had taken a point one or two steps further. She notes, for example, that the memory of persecution helps both communities maintain a sense of identity. This raises many questions. How exactly do the Amish keep the memory of persecution alive thousands of miles from the homes of their early martyrs? Will the repopulations preserve their own martyrdom memories after the passing of the first generation? And what exactly is the link between persecution and identity? Should new utopian communities actively court persecution, or is there a gentler way to achieve the same effect?

I also wondered about the connections between contemporary religious practice and the historical roots of Anabaptism and progressive Catholicism. Do modern Amish still feel the zeal for the reign of God that led their forebears to the stake? How have the Salvadoran repopulators come to terms with the Catholic hierarchy's sharp turn away from liberation theology and with the rise of Latin American evangelicalism? Are catechists still the most important community leaders, or have they been supplanted by guerrilla commanders turned opposition politicians?

Most important, I wished that Peterson had delved deeper into the tension between sustainability and utopianism. In her final chapter, she brilliantly rebuts both neoorthodox and postmodern critiques of utopianism, but she does not come to terms with the possibility that Anabaptist remnant theology might itself be antiutopian. Amish resistance to technology, for example, is the key to the environmental sustainability of their farms, but it also reflects a Burkean tendency to view any change as guilty until proven innocent. The repopulators, by contrast, embrace the antiglobalist mantra that "another world is possible." Their enthusiasm for change makes it easy for them to link social justice to environmental sustainability, but it also makes me wonder if any of their exemplary practices will be in place a generation from now.

Such unresolved tensions detract little from the importance of this book. If Peterson's work sparks new conversations among Amish, repopulators, and

other seekers of God's reign, it may be that the sustainable utopia will emerge not in the pages of a book, but in the lives of new communities and—perhaps—a new global society.

DAN MCKANAN, *College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University*.

FERRY, LUC. *What Is the Good Life?* Translated by Lydia Cochrane. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. 320 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).

Luc Ferry argues in his latest book that the question of the good life stands out with urgent new possibilities, even at the end of metaphysics, "after religion and beyond morality," and thus after the deconstructions of the generation of French philosophers preceding him (21–27). Along the way, he attempts to recover what he sees as the historically soteriological character of philosophy from its temporary "postmodern" forfeiture. The result of these efforts is a stunningly written, bravely conceived, and profoundly important book that, quite simply, needs to be read.

One of France's most public "public philosophers," Ferry interprets the prominent standing and new possibilities for thinking the good life through two related contemporary Western cultural conditions. First, "after religion" and the closure of metaphysics, the contemporary world has become disenchanted. But this does not mean that either the question of the transcendence of value or the sacred has been exhausted. Rather, transcendence has shifted to a horizontal plane, indicated by what Ferry describes as the "sacralization of the human."

Related to this shift is the condition "beyond morality." Ferry means here that the moral minimalism of modern democracies neither quenches the human thirst for transcendent meaning nor explains the motivation to ongoing acts of sacrifice. Commitments to respect the liberty and well-being of others, by the very necessity of their presence, point beyond themselves. They provide too little normative guidance for life amid the concrete relations "with others that alone confer meaning and worth to commerce among people" (23). They do not serve to motivate acts of sacrifice, which for Ferry suggests the continuing significance of the sacred in human affairs. For these reasons, one can state that morality (a very historically specific sense in Ferry's usage) indicates from within itself "a need to go beyond morality" (23).

Through these conditions Ferry daringly advances his "non-metaphysical" transcendental humanism, also referred to as a "humanism of the Man-God" (265–66, 39–42). He presents this humanism in terms of three commitments, which he argues do not require a crossing of the boundaries of finite human reason and so can be confidently held in a postmetaphysical, postreligious moment.

The first commitment is to the human species' difference from other forms of life, that is, an "excess" of freedom from nature evidenced most emphatically in the distinct human capacities for hatred and wickedness. Ferry's second commitment is to the objective irreducibility of value. For Ferry, value is discovered rather than constructed. Third, in triangulated relation to the first two, Ferry argues for an account of transcendence as immanent within the human condition. The absolute binding value of human life, its transcendent character, emerges through and is not given from beyond human life.

Ferry explains by way of this combination of commitments that the "spiritual" dimension of his humanism most adequately refers not to an ultimate

foundation or metaphysical vision, or to a supreme being, but rather to the “infinitely mobile” horizon of life’s deep worth, mysteriously present to but also always partially concealed by human consciousness (269). For Ferry, the notion of the “horizon” of value is crucial to any postmetaphysical conception of the sacred, which brings this reader around to a basic critical question: How adequate is the conception of the “religious” used by Ferry in his argument that the world is in a condition “after religion”?

Ferry explains that “after religion” does not mean there are numerically fewer contemporary instances of religious conviction but that what being religious means has been altered by way of the passage of religion through modernity. The results of this passage are most evident in Europe, where he suggests that emancipation from traditional conceptions of religion is a social fact, where religion has become increasingly privatized, and where a democratic ethos rules out arguments from authority. In brief, Ferry’s account of religion quite closely and self-consciously follows Marcel Gauchet’s classic work on the political history of religion in *The Disenchantment of the World* (Princeton, NJ, 1997).

Even if one limits this view of the postreligious condition to Europe, instead of treating Europe as emblematic for the whole world, Ferry’s account of the religious is not capacious enough. It is controlled by Protestant features and does not adequately interpret Europe’s emerging demographic reality. Further, the instances of religion’s public impact in Europe are too numerous to cite, as Ferry well knows as a former minister of education in the administration of Jacques Chirac.

While on the one hand this weakness in Ferry’s account of the religious condition does not take away from the importance of this book, on the other hand, for this reader at least, it points to an area Ferry needs to develop not only to support his descriptive claims but also to further the moral case for his new humanism. The very narrow account of the religious condition shrinks the relevance of his constructive position. Might it not be that the greatest service of a “transcendental” or “spiritual” humanism is to provide a bridge for thinking and living the good life in dialogue with others in a pluralistic world that is in many ways more religious than ever?

MICHAEL S. HOGUE, *Meadville Lombard Theological School*.

DALLMAYR, FRED. *Peace Talks—Who Will Listen?* Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2004. 288 pp. \$20.00 (paper).

The year 2006 was a disaster for those of us who have concluded that war is a failed human option. If the intent is conquest, even the best result is fleeting. If the intent is security, then by the means it seeks security it also destroys security. Since war has proved a scourge for our species, the question is why it remains for some a fascinating hope. Such folks are almost always males covetous of power, and the victims they leave behind are mostly women and children whose lives their wars have devastated. It is the reality of this sad lament that powers the pages and passion of *Peace Talks*, whose author, Fred Dallmayr, is the Packey J. Dee Professor of Political Theory at the University of Notre Dame.

Dallmayr organizes his argument by returning the reader again and again to the classic text *The Complaint of Peace*, written by Erasmus and published in 1517. The complaint is direct and starkly confirmed by everything that has happened since it was first written. “What is there of prosperity, of security, or

of happiness," Peace proclaims, "that cannot be ascribed to me? On the other hand, is not war the destroyer of all things and the very seed of evil? What is there of prosperity that it does not infect; what is secure or pleasant that it does not undermine?" (2).

Although he is a political scientist, the author's primary partners in discourse are not the likes of Marx or Machiavelli but thinkers drawn broadly from various religious and philosophical traditions, mostly but by no means exclusively from the West. Immanuel Kant, Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Sartre, Hannah Arendt, and John Rawls are drawn into the "complaint" that Peace makes against war. But, even more, Dallmayr draws the reader into discussion with representatives of world religions: Christian, Confucian, Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu.

In the end, that is the strength of this book. *Peace Talks* makes obvious that the voice of peace is thunderous across the ages and from every philosophical and religious tradition. Yet wars persist. The reason is that, as the author says, "war is in many respects easier than peace, war-making less arduous than peace-making" (20), which makes the pursuit of peace a more difficult but also a more excellent calling.

This book can be used to advantage in courses both in political science and in religious studies. It is clearly written and ranges deftly over the wide panorama of Western and Eastern civilizations. And it brings that discussion up to date with reflections on the mutual misunderstandings between Islam and the West in the post-9/11 world.

JOHN RAINES, *Temple University*.

WALL, JOHN. *Moral Creativity: Paul Ricoeur and the Poetics of Possibility*. Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. viii+234 pp. \$55.00 (cloth).

In *Moral Creativity*, John Wall gives us a work that is at once a constructive metaethical reflection, an interpretation of Paul Ricoeur, and a conversation with various strands of postmodern philosophical and theological ethics.

Wall claims that "moral life is inherently creative" and that this fact "demands a fundamental rethinking of the nature and meaning of moral life itself" (vii). For Wall, creativity is a possibility that is primordial to human being, ultimately expressing humans' imitation of the creative power of God. The importance of creativity has been covered over by a tendency in the West to separate poetics from ethics. Wall aims to remedy this lack by explicating moral creativity as the capacity to invent an ever more inclusive vision of life. This moral creativity is developed in stages, from the being of the moral self as a creative tension of freedom and finitude (chap. 1), to the capacity of humans to bring narrative unity to their moral lives (chap. 2), through the poetic response demanded by otherness (chap. 3), to the creation of ideologies and utopias in social life (chap. 4). As an original contribution to moral reflection, this book has much to recommend it. While it is certainly not unusual today to see a call for ethics to become poetic, in postmodernism this usually means abandoning ethical reflection in favor of poetic invention of self or community. Wall manages instead to link poetic creativity to philosophical reflection, making creativity the symbolic ground of discourses of philosophical anthropology, teleological and deontological ethics, and social critical/libera-

tionist thought. Wall's use of specific narratives is likewise fruitful: tragedy is used for reflection on the status of moral evil and limitation, while the biblical creation story is interpreted to symbolize the potentialities of creativity. In sum, the book delivers on its promise to heal the divide between poetics and ethics, rather than simply replacing ethics with poetics.

Moral Creativity is also a book about Paul Ricoeur. Throughout, Wall turns to Ricoeur's philosophical and religious thought for theoretical support, using a wide range of primary and secondary literature. Wall works from a Ricoeurian idea that the self is a synthesis of activity and passivity, freedom and finitude. He finds in this ontology of selfhood a basis for conceiving of creativity as the activity of inventing free action amid the limitations of finitude. This anthropology is then tied to Ricoeur's work on narrative identity, love, ideology, and other topics. Wall's exegesis of Ricoeur is accurate and astute, succinctly connecting the thinker's early and late writings on selfhood. The book faults Ricoeur for having an insufficient sense for the entrenchment of social/cultural injustice and for the radical otherness of other people. The discussion of Ricoeur and Emmanuel Levinas on otherness is one of the most interesting parts of the book but also an argument that might need expansion. Wall laments Ricoeur's decision to separate philosophy from religious discourse, claiming this was a purely pragmatic decision whereby "Ricoeur ultimately does himself a disservice" (181). This may be so, but regardless of intent, wouldn't we have to say that such a separation is part of the thought world projected by Ricoeur's writings? Patching over this separation may bring Ricoeur closer to writers of the current "theological turn" of postmodernism but possibly at the price of losing one of Ricoeur's great virtues—his usefulness in mediating between postmodernism and the modernity that insists on dividing religion and reason.

Finally, in *Moral Creativity* Wall carries out a dialogue with a wide variety of contemporary philosophical and theological voices, including narrative theology, recent Aristotelianisms, feminism, liberation theology, communicative ethics, and others. Often, the intent is to show how the voice captures only one side of the tension between freedom and finitude. Ricoeur, with his passive/active model of selfhood, is presented as the corrective to such one-sided accounts. In fact, one of the great virtues of the book is the fact that it makes Ricoeur's voluminous writings available to the debates of contemporary ethics in an accessible way. Wall's original reflections on contemporary ethical thought are clear-eyed as well, particularly some of his comments on the status of evil in narrative theology.

Wall has skillfully woven the exegetical, dialogical, and constructive parts of his project into a thought-provoking and readable work. *Moral Creativity* could be profitably read by anyone familiar with contemporary debates in religious and philosophical ethics. It will both broaden the appeal of Ricoeur's writings and advance the conversation about the relation of ethics to poetics.

GLENN WHITEHOUSE, *Florida Gulf Coast University*.

CHAZAN, ROBERT. *Fashioning Jewish Identity in Medieval Western Christendom*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. xv+379 pp. \$75.00 (cloth).

Robert Chazan, a prominent scholar of Jewish life in medieval western Europe, has written extensively on the Jewish-Christian polemical encounter. Chazan's latest work, *Fashioning Jewish Identity in Medieval Western Christendom*, examines

the earliest works of Jewish anti-Christian polemic composed under Christian rule. The first European Jewish literary responses to the challenges posed by Christianity appeared in southern France and northern Spain in the second half of the twelfth century. This period witnessed the confluence of Christian cultural invigoration and increased missionary interest with the arrival of an influx of Jewish refugees from Muslim North Africa and Andalusia, who brought with them a prior tradition of Judeo-Arabic anti-Christian polemical argumentation. Two of these refugees, Joseph Kimhi and Jacob ben Rueben, composed Hebrew treatises devoted to dismantling the core scriptural, theological, and historical tenets of the majority Christian faith, effectively creating a new literary genre. Chazan focuses on these earliest efforts and on the works of several later polemical authors who emerged from the same region: the noted biblical commentator David Kimhi (Joseph's son); Meir ben Simon, an early thirteenth-century Provençal communal leader; and the great thirteenth-century Spanish figure Moses ben Nahman (Nahmanides).

In contrast to later Spanish-Jewish works that mount sophisticated philosophical critiques of Christianity, these early works focus primarily on the refutation of christological interpretations of Scripture, although they devote some attention to arguments from reason and history. Chazan renders this technical exegetical material highly accessible to a broad readership. In an introductory section, he traces the early development of the Christian ideas about Judaism that framed the medieval debate and describes the limited corpus of earlier Jewish writings against Christianity composed within the Muslim orbit. The body of the work is ordered schematically, with chapters organized around the core controversies that underlie the most common scriptural arguments represented in these texts. Chapters are also devoted to these polemicists' attacks on Christian theology and contemporary behavior. Direct exposition of the material is interspersed with typological description and qualitative evaluation of the polemicists' work in light of countervailing Christian arguments and contemporary social and political circumstances. The concluding chapters of the work provide a general assessment of these writings, in which Chazan argues that they both represented an effective response to the Christian challenge and promoted a clearer self-definition of Jewish identity through the articulation of contrasts with the majority community. Chazan's final remarks, in which he points to fundamental similarities in the criteria for assessing religious validity employed by both twelfth-century Jews and Christians, are especially interesting.

Fashioning Jewish Identity is clearly written and well conceived, and it provides a cogent portrayal of the religious ideas, polemical techniques, and general social context informing these works that will be useful for both beginner and expert readers. Chazan's exploration of the conceptual disagreements underlying what have often been perceived as sterile scriptural debates is particularly helpful, and he successfully retrieves this type of exegetical argumentation as a meaningful locus of discussion. The work is also valuable for its presentation of two little-known and previously untranslated texts, Meir ben Simon's *Milhemet mitzvah* and Nahmanides' *Sefer ha-ge'ulah*. Chazan is less thorough in his historical contextualization of these writings, however. Although he discusses twelfth- and thirteenth-century Christian intellectual developments in general terms, the work includes no systematic treatment of Christian thought beyond Augustine, and Chazan provides only a handful of comparative references to contemporary Christian thinkers: Similarly, Chazan references these writers'

employment of earlier Judeo-Arabic polemical models, but he does not examine the extent to which the specific exegetical arguments he describes are adopted from earlier authorities, making it difficult to assess the degree of real innovation that they reflect. Nonetheless, those wishing to draw such comparisons in the future will find their task immeasurably facilitated by Chazan's careful representation of these works.

EVE KRAKOWSKI, *Chicago, Illinois*.

SCHORSCH, JONATHAN. *Jews and Blacks in the Early Modern World*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. xii+546 pp. \$85.00 (cloth).

Jonathan Schorsch's hefty volume is an important contribution to the growing amount of research on the ways in which the black person has been depicted in the history of Jewish culture. The history of the Jewish attitude toward the Blacks—from the days of the Mishnah and Talmud until modern times—is a classic test case of the ways in which a minority group, treated as the inferior other in the cultural milieu in which it operates, identifies its own inferior other.

Chronologically, this book treats the early modern period—roughly from the early sixteenth century to the late eighteenth century. In this respect it fills the almost unexplored lacuna in previous research, which has largely focused on either earlier periods (such as my own book: Abraham Melamed, *The Black in Jewish Culture: A History of the Other* [London and New York, 2003], which covers developments from biblical literature to early modern writings) or on the Jewish-Black relationship in the United States since abolition (in which field there are too many publications to mention). Geographically, this book moves from the Muslim Mediterranean through southern and western Europe and into the American colonies ruled by the Dutch and English; it focuses on the Atlantic world system, and here lies its main importance, since the earlier Mediterranean and southern European environment has already been treated in the scholarship. Nonetheless, the detailed description of this movement from the Mediterranean and the western European world to the Atlantic world is essential for understanding of the forces that fashioned the attitudes of those Jews who emigrated from Europe to the New World.

The author wisely begins his book with the transitional figure of Isaac Abarbanel (chap. 1). Abarbanel—a native of Portugal and a financier, leader, and scholar, who fled to Spain, and after the Expulsion moved to Italy, where he died in Venice in 1508—clearly exemplifies the transition from the medieval to the early modern Jewish attitude toward the Blacks. The abundance of references to this issue in his voluminous writings makes his views clear while his prominence in the Jewish cultural history of this period is a sign of their influence. Abarbanel was deeply anchored by the classical Jewish sources that dealt with the Blacks—the Hebrew Bible, the Talmud, and the Midrash—and by the medieval references to this issue (from Judah Halevi to Maimonides), which he continued to interpret and elaborate upon in the medieval style. At the same time, however, he was conscious of the renewal of Black slavery in southern Europe in the late fifteenth century and consequently read the old sources in a new light. As the author correctly observes, Abarbanel's attitude stemmed from the need of (western European) Jews—as well as Spanish-Cath-

olic Jews—to identify themselves as white skinned, which led them to abhor anything black.

The author then goes on to explore the issues treated in the textual traditions, such as that of Moses's Kushite wife (chap. 4), the ways Blacks were imagined (chap. 5), and the traditions concerning the curse of Ham (chap. 6) as they were reinterpreted in early modern Jewish culture. These discussions are always thorough and interesting, but they are mostly just variations on themes well known from medieval culture. Schorsch's discussion of the way Black slaves were treated by Jewish owners vis-à-vis other slaves—in theory and in practice (chaps. 2 and 3, as well as chap. 9, which deals with Jewish-owned slaves in the Dutch and English colonies in the Americas)—is much more innovative. However, as the author carefully observes, since the literary traditions are much more abundant than the evidence treating the social "realia" in the Mediterranean regions, it is difficult to assess practical Jewish attitudes. Having said that, Schorsch concludes that the attitude toward Black slaves in Jewish households was not much different from that toward other domestic slaves. This only goes to show how the deeply ingrained, culturally imagined images of the Black as inferior did not always translate into the daily treatment of Black slaves in ways worse than treatment of other slaves.

The discussion of the ways in which western European Jews and, following them, Jews who settled in the Atlantic region invented their whiteness and thus distanced themselves from anything black (chaps. 7 and 8) is extremely important and interesting. This is in many respects the core of the book. Although this invention of whiteness can be traced back to biblical and Midrashic literature, there is no question that it reached its peak in the early modern and modern "enlightened" Jewish attempt to identify with the white European and so fully achieve integration into modern European and, later, American society. This necessitated distancing the Jew from any Black associations made by generations of anti-Jewish texts and identifying him completely as a white person. -

The author's conclusion that the "Jewish slaveholding in the Americas bore few Jewish particularities" (296) is of major importance and corroborates previous research on earlier periods. Schorsch also concluded that the Jewish attitude toward the Black phenomena, including quite a few derogatory references (which Schorsch wisely does not ignore), was part of a universal human attitude toward the "other," whoever it might have been. This attitude, therefore, is part of the psychological mechanism by which groups defined as the inferior other by the majority cultures in which they operate will always attempt to identify their own inferior others. This book confirms that such was the case as far as cultural attitudes went, whereas in the realm of historical realia, it argues, Jewish slaveholders in the American colonies who desired to belong to the white elite behaved toward their slaves—even Black slaves—"like Jews when for the better, but like non-Jews when for the worse" (298).

The book includes six appendixes, with the names of slaves owned by Sephardic Jews in the American colonies, as well as detailed notes and a bibliography (about two hundred pages!). The study as a whole is an important contribution to research and should be read by all those interested in understanding the formation of the modern Jewish mentality.

ABRAHAM MELAMED, *University of Haifa*.

BERKOVITZ, JAY R. *Rites and Passages: The Beginnings of Modern Jewish Culture in France, 1650–1860*. Jewish Culture and Context Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. 333 pp. \$49.95 (cloth).

The transformation of German Jewish life has served as the dominant historical paradigm for Jewish modernization since the nineteenth century. According to the classic narrative, expanded encounters between Jews and gentiles engendered both a pronounced increase in deviation from traditional Jewish observance and new ways of thinking about collective life and education. The subsequent loss of communal autonomy and efforts to achieve political emancipation intensified the process of acculturation and secularization, erasing the homogeneity that had characterized medieval Jewry and leading some to full assimilation. Other Jews, by contrast, applied contemporary ideals and critical scientific method to long-held customs and sacred texts with the intention of producing an updated “reformed” Judaism or at least defining its essence according to the intellectual standards of the time.

Recent historiography has produced a more varied portrayal of European Jewish modernization that demonstrates greater sensitivity to geographic, cultural, socioeconomic, and political diversity. Jay Berkovitz’s learned and meticulous work on French Jewry is an important contribution to this effort.

Throughout the *ancien régime* the main areas of Jewish life in Alsace-Lorraine remained part and parcel of *Ashkenaz*, the Central European geographic and cultural orbit that was rooted in medieval German-Jewish tradition. Thus, as the author establishes from the outset, the French departure from the German model is particularly significant. That being said, he argues that too much emphasis has been placed on the role of the 1789 revolution in detaching French Jewry from this legacy. Instead, he suggests that changes in French Jewish life during the previous century “anticipated” the more radical departures of the nineteenth century and served as a “first stage in the unfolding of modernity” (84). While I found some of the examples of prerevolutionary modernization to be less than compelling, I was rewarded nonetheless by the most thorough investigation of eighteenth-century French Jewish culture that has appeared to date.

Berkovitz stands out as a careful and knowledgeable reader of Jewish religious texts. This comes across in his close analysis of communal statutes (*takkanot*), sumptuary laws, rabbinic responsa, and liturgical tracts—much of it archival material. One of the rabbinic figures whom Berkovitz liberates from virtual anonymity through his archival sleuthing is Aaron Worms of Metz, whose intellectual virtuosity and maverick style may warrant a separate monograph.

The second and third sections of the book focus on the new French Republic and the French Jewish culture that evolved during the first half of the nineteenth century. Regarding the revolution itself, Berkovitz feels that rather than leading to an immediate change in the nature of Jewish life, the upheavals that surrounded the turn of the nineteenth century actually delayed the modernization process and caused French Jewry to lag behind their German brethren. Only during the Bourbon period did the full significance of Jewish emancipation and the Napoleonic reconfiguration of the Jewish communal structure come to bear. At that point, the “consistory” system finally took root and forged a new centralized communal framework in which lay leaders began to dominate the clergy within communal decision making, rabbinical hierarchies

themselves were realigned, Jewish schools predicated on the integration of secular and religious studies replaced the *heder* (traditional one-room religious school), and a central religious seminary was established in Metz with the exclusive sanction to authorize rabbinical ordination. Here, once again, the author utilizes the classical German-centric narrative and its categories for defining modernization—religious reform, scientific inquiry, rabbinic authority, and the tension between ethnic-religious allegiance and national patriotism—as foils for evaluating the particular character of the nascent French Jewish culture.

Why were moderate changes in worship and custom that caused great strife in Germany generally accepted, while the radical religious reforms that came to dominate German synagogue life were roundly rejected by French Jewry? Berkovitz offers a two-tiered explanation: unlike the Germans who saw reform as a necessity for attaining political emancipation, French Jewry received citizenship already at the end of the eighteenth century. Therefore, calls for reform were less influenced by political considerations and stemmed primarily from internal theological discussion. Moreover, the French *consistoire* utilized its centralized authority to mediate between modernizers and traditionalists so that all could find their place within the new religious rubric that had been established. The freshly emancipated French Jews generally looked favorably upon the Republic. For the most part, then, they sought to cooperate with the bodies of the state that served in France as the driving forces of modernization. Although I am not yet ready to demote the French Revolution from its pre-eminent role in the transformation of Franco-Jewish life, *Rites and Passages* is a rich work of scholarship that tells with great erudition the unique story of French Jewish modernization.

ADAM S. FERZIGER, *Bar-Ilan University*.

BOROWITZ, EUGENE B. *The Talmud's Theological Language-Game: A Philosophical Discourse Analysis*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006. 316 pp. \$75.00 (cloth).

When, in 1991, Eugene Borowitz, considered by many to be the premier liberal Jewish theologian at work today, published *Renewing the Covenant* (his long-awaited theological *apologia pro sua fide*), even many of those otherwise sympathetic to either his point of view or his enterprise felt that the book still did not show just how he had developed his Jewish theology out of the classical sources of Judaism. Of course, that criticism did not intend to point out a lack in the book itself. It is, after all, distracting to present many references and textual analyses in what is essentially a book written in the first person. Instead, many of us hoped that Borowitz would write a sequel to his 1991 book, a sequel that would provide, as it were, its footnotes. That hope is now realized in his latest book, *The Talmud's Theological Language-Game*. Borowitz has always been very coherent in his theology; we now can see how well it corresponds with the Talmud (specifically, the *Bavli* or "Babylonian Talmud"), which the great modern Hebrew poet H. N. Bialik once called "the workshop of the soul of the [Jewish] people."

There are two modes of discourse in the Talmud: *halakhah*, which comprises the legal discussions of the rabbis and is concerned with how the commandments of God (*mitsvot*) are to be practiced, and *aggadah*, which Borowitz calls

"Non-Halakhic Discourse" (NHD for short, and so throughout the book). Even though *aggadah* comprises a good deal of what we would call "folklore," still most of it comprises theological speculation. It is this kind of *aggadah* that concerns Borowitz the theologian. His book is "philosophical" (as stated in the subtitle) in the sense that Borowitz very explicitly adopts a Wittgensteinian philosophical posture (one thinks of the Lutheran theologian George Lindbeck at this point); namely, there is a "language-game" (what Wittgenstein also, more helpfully, called a "natural language") we now call "Jewish theology," whose most authentic expression is in the *aggadah*. Like any such language, aggadic theology has its own "logic," which, like any such natural language, comprises more than just the rules of formal logic (being more like *Logik* in neo-Kantian philosophy, or more like "method" in the thought of the late Catholic theologian Bernard Lonergan), a point greatly aided by Wittgenstein's demolition of logical positivism. "Philosophy" explicates that logic, much as it explicates the logic of any "form-of-life" (another Wittgensteinian term Borowitz uses, one having close affinity, by the way, to Husserl's *Lebenswelt*).

Borowitz provides minute (yet always clear) analyses of how *aggadah* operates logically. He also gives the reader very good and concise discussions of some of the newer, more "literary" (coming in the wake of Wittgenstein's "linguistic turn") treatments of *aggadah* by younger scholars, as well as utilizing the work of deceased scholars such as H. S. Hirschfeld and Max Kadushin, whose prescient insights were largely ignored in their own day and even whose names are almost totally unknown in our own.

The leitmotif that keeps Borowitz's book on the track of its trajectory, with or despite a massive number of quotes and citations in the book that could easily cause the reader to miss the forest for the trees, is his constant reflection on the dialectic between *aggadah* and *halakhah*. Note how he states that dialectic most emphatically: "While *halakhah* seeks to define just what constitutes one's obligation, the *aggadah* often attempts to supply the theological and historical foundation of Jewish duty" (59). He calls this "Judaism's metahalakhic foundations" (59) I think the core of the book lies in these two sentences. To fully unpack them would require a book at least equal in length to Borowitz's, but let me draw a few implications nonetheless.

Despite Borowitz's appreciation for what seems to be deconstructionism's antifoundationalism and penchant for insisting on "polysemic" discourse, he sees aggadic thinking to be foundational in two senses. First, "it has a theological foundation [which is] . . . this privileging of the Bible" (135). Second, *aggadah* "influences and reinforces *halakhah* . . . the critical framework [another key term and concept Borowitz employs towards the end of the book] that aggadic instruction transgresses at its peril" (142). In other words, *aggadah* is not just discussion of any "text"; it is discussion of the only Scripture worth talking about (which reminds one of Northrop Frye, another great Bible reader, and his notion of "the great code"). Moreover, maximally, *aggadah* provides what Borowitz calls Judaism's *Grundnorm* (187), even though one cannot deduce specific points of *halakhah* (i.e., *halakhot*) from *aggadah*. Thus the rabbinic dogma "the Torah is from God" generally authorizes various practices to be termed "commandments" (*mitsvot*), even though these commandments are not conclusions drawn from aggadic premises. Minimally, *aggadah* may not contradict a codified halakhic norm, but only unofficially supplement it. In other words: *halakhah* is the *conditio sine qua non* of *aggadah*, but *aggadah* is not the

causa sui of *halakhah*. *Halakhah* is informed by *aggadah*, but it is not created by *aggadah*. And *aggadah* is limited by *halakhah*, but it is not derived from *halakhah*.

Aggadah is only “antifoundational” if a “foundation” means a nontextual ground, as an *Urphänomen* functions for some phenomenologists (like Levinas’s *l’autre*), or if it means an irreducible insight like Descartes’s *cogito*. Furthermore, aggadic discourse is very much framed by the normative structure of the community in which and among whom it is conducted. Without this foundation and without this context, aggadic discourse cannot help but break down into the “relativism and moral nihilism” (135) where Borowitz himself sees deconstructionism (and its various offshoots and cognates) headed.

So far, I have been agreeing with Borowitz and have only been attempting to draw out some of the implications of what he has been saying in this book: a commentary, as it were. Nevertheless, I must question his optimism in “the contemporary academic effort to express the nature of Jewish belief . . . in ways that emulate the activity of the Talmudic sages” (193). Like Borowitz, I spend a lot of time working in that world of “Jewish studies” and very much benefit from its recent academic success. But that is not where faithful Jews live. Instead, faithful Jews live in the synagogue where we regularly worship God and the “house of learning” (*bet midrash*) where God’s Torah is regularly expounded. In these two places, the discourse of *aggadah* does occur because the centrality of the Torah is always evident and because most of the people here live their lives structured by *halakhah*. To be sure, we Jewish studies academics bring some of the things we have learned in the academy back to the synagogue and *bet midrash*, but these things are always, in the rabbinic phrase, “side-dishes of wisdom” (Mishnah: Avot 3:18). Here the discourse of *aggadah* (and *halakhah*) goes on uninterrupted, whereas academic discourse here is but an occasional visitor (and in some places, unlike those Jewish places Borowitz and I frequent, academic discourse is taken to be a dangerous intruder). In the academy, though, Judaism can speak only historically and philosophically (and, contra Wittgenstein, philosophy is a language and not just a logic), however inadequately, however tentatively. Yet I see no *aggadah* there because Scripture and its theology long ago ceased to be “Queen of the Sciences” there, nor does the academy in its growing antinomianism have anything even resembling *halakhah*.

DAVID NOVAK, *University of Toronto*.

PETERS, FRANCIS E. *The Monotheists: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Conflict and Competition*, vol. 1, *The Peoples of God*, and vol. 2, *The Words and Will of God*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003. Vol. 1, xvii+328 pp. \$45.00 (cloth); \$19.95 (paper). Vol. 2, xxv+406 pp. \$45.00 (cloth); \$19.95 (paper).

Francis E. Peters’s *The Monotheists: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Conflict and Competition* is a sweeping work that very nearly defies classification. While engaging in historical analysis, the work represents the best of the disciplines of religious studies—anthropological, sociological, and theological analyses ground each and every page. Peters’s style and voice make the work eminently readable, sometimes conversational, and often humorous.

The first volume, *The Peoples of God*, describes the formation and evolution of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, not as if these religions developed in iso-

lation but accounting for the internal and external pressures that gave them some measure of their shape. Most important, Peters traces the religious development of the three religions as they have mutually influenced each other, sometimes gently but often not. The second volume, *The Words and Will of God*, moves from the "externals of community formation" to its own topic, "the internal or spiritual life of the monotheists, the working out of God's will in the lives, hearts, and minds of his believers" (1:xx).

The Monotheists does not contribute new historical research, nor does it directly challenge previous scholarship. Rather, Peters draws together historical and religious detail often segregated in works about the religions individually, or about the interaction between two of them, into a work that seeks to provide an overarching vision of the interrelation of the monotheistic religions through two millennia. In the course of sketching these relations, however, Peters does implicitly challenge some popular work in the field. For instance, Peters presents a sober account of interreligious relations in al-Andalus. While it was not a utopia of tolerance, there did exist a relatively "effective degree of *convivencia*, or coexistence. It was, perhaps, forbearance rather than genuine toleration" (1:141). Such sobriety stands in sharp contrast to romanticizations about the interreligious climate of al-Andalus—for example, Maria Rosa Menocal's *The Ornament of the World* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2002). It is, indeed, Peters's generally measured approach to the relations between these three great religions and their interactions that most recommends his work to students beginning to explore this material.

The form of the work is not chronological but topical; thus, most chapters trace at least two millennia, and details are often repeated. Sometimes tedious for the scholar, this repetition of important facts and terms in a variety of contexts makes the book ideal for students and reveals the book's origins in erudite lectures. The work is cross-referenced when topics are introduced that are to be discussed more fully later on, and key terms and topics are boxed off within the text as notes, not to be confused with references. Scriptures and some primary sources of theology are referenced within the text, but formal notes, including bibliographic reference, are entirely lacking. While this is largely unproblematic for those wetting their feet in the vast waters of the field, the lack of references to sources or even a bibliography or suggested readings limits the usefulness of this work as either a reference for scholars engaged in work concerned with the matter of these books or a launching pad for the intrepid student's further investigations. Many scholars, working in a variety of fields of religious studies, may find in *The Monotheists* a vast trove of knowledge, but this work seems most useful as an introduction for students to the three religions.

The problem of references is related to other problems with the work. Peters does not directly address the works of other scholars in the field, either for support or to raise objections. A vast field of scholarship and countless unacknowledged scholars contributed to the erudition displayed in these volumes; one is left to surmise what authorities and whose scholarship is being displayed and, more important, whose is being neglected. When debated points are stated as facts by the author without acknowledging scholarly debate or disagreement, a scholarly reader may question the care taken with other details. Most scholars possess only a small portion of Peters's own learning in the material he covers, but if an insensitivity to debated issues in their own fields is perceived, even if these details seem inconsequential with regard to the

thrust of this massive work, doubts are likely to be raised regarding the wider material.

For instance, Peters's account of Aquinas's *Summa Contra Gentiles* as a missionary tool, requested by Raymond of Penaforte and thus penned in 1270–72 (1:143), is highly debated, and the fact that this debate passes unacknowledged may raise the hackles of the scholar of Christian doctrine who has a good deal to learn from the work's larger scope. Similarly, there are claims such as those to the effect that, because they were not adopted universally or authoritatively, "Maimonides' Thirteen Principles had little effect on Judaism" (despite the unacknowledged presence of a poeticized version of the Thirteen Principles in many prayer books) or that the sentiment that there are no dogmas in Judaism was "fathered" by Moses Mendelssohn (1:166). Both of these claims could be beneficially nuanced with reference to relevant scholarship, for instance, Menachem Kellner's *Must a Jew Believe Anything?* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1999).

This is not mere quibbling, nor is the imprecision of such claims isolated. Such examples illustrate the importance of reference in any contemporary scholarly work. Further, the last example illustrates how *The Monotheists* sometimes becomes victim of its easy and conversational, rather than more tedious but more exact, tone, which is certainly one of its great strengths as a teaching tool. There can be no doubt that *The Monotheists* is a blessing for students seeking a wide knowledge of how Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have interacted, but for the scholar it is a decidedly mixed blessing.

JAMES ALLEN GRADY, *Vanderbilt University*.

LEV, YAACOV. *Charity, Endowments, and Charitable Institutions in Medieval Islam*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of America, 2005. x+214 pp. \$53.95 (cloth).

This study adds an important resource to the still sparse library of books and articles on charity in premodern Islam. While there is a substantial literature on the institution of the Islamic pious foundation (the *waqf*), this book focuses on one aspect, the charitable aspect, of that important centerpiece of Islamic society. Lev recognizes that the *waqf* served a social and political function as well. When created by a ruler, it helped legitimize his authority and create loyalties in those who were its beneficiaries. The *waqf* was used to establish and maintain social institutions, such as law colleges, hospitals, mosques, water fountains, and Koranic schools for orphans. Lev is particularly interested in the existential aspect of charity, whether in the form of food distributions at holiday times, the redemption of captives, or the building of a college. In Lev's words, "On the personal level, the distribution of charity in medieval Islamic society served as a way for the individual to communicate with God. It served to implore God for deliverance at times of personal distress, to thank God for success, and to expiate sins" (21). The evidence for this function comes in part from the desire of benefactors to have beneficiaries pray for their well-being and salvation, the devotion of rulers to the welfare of residents of the Holy Cities in Arabia, the care for mausoleums and for residents of cemeteries, and support for mystics and for the pious.

The beneficence of rulers, however, was rarely directed solely at the actual poor. Many targets for their munificence existed, and poverty was often incidental. Lodgings for mystics or for travelers might benefit the poor among

them (wayfarers and mystics, of course, were often needy), but this was not their original or primary function. This reminds us of ancient, pre-Christian Greco-Roman society, where benefactors gave to individuals or to a city, or supported hostels to lodge and feed wayfarers, in order to enhance their own standing in society. If the poor were among the recipients, it was largely secondary.

Lev identifies a new category of religiously pious (and usually poor) beneficiaries of charity, sometimes called *mastur*, more often *ahl al-satr* or *arbab al-buyut*, and understands these as people who live in pious seclusion. As he notes, I differ with him on the emphasis on piety as an essential characteristic of this class of people, my evidence coming from medieval Jewish documents in the Cairo Geniza. It is possible that the Geniza vocabulary omits the nuance Lev believes to have uncovered. More thought needs to be given to the matter.

The author occasionally makes other judicious comparisons with Judaism and more so with charity in Byzantium and Catholic Europe. The comparisons Lev makes will be of interest to European, Byzantine, and Jewish historians. He notes, for instance, and quite correctly, that the absence of a "church" institution in Islam helps explain the centrality of other resources for charity, namely, the state and the individual. The state manifests its contribution through sultanic *waqfs* and through often generous distributions of food and other necessities to the needy, at times of religious celebration or funerals in particular. Individual "commoners"—merchants, members of the religious class (the *ulama*), and women (who appear, naturally, far less frequently in the sources than royal lady philanthropists)—were also active in fulfilling the religious duty of charity.

The range of sources the author has combed is impressive. The geographical and chronological scope is broad, ranging across the entire Islamic world and covering the period from the ninth century to the sixteenth. It is thus a study of medieval and early Ottoman society. If the author does not focus on one area or period of time, if he does not uncover major changes during this stretch of time, it is because he believes in the continuity of how charity was viewed and practiced for centuries. He notes some new developments in the Ottoman period, but lacking a separate chapter devoted to this, one can glide past those changes.

Notably in this book, as in other studies of charity in the Islamic Middle Ages, we largely lack the voice of the poor themselves. Islamic sources for this population are simply not available. On the other hand, the documentary remains of the Jewish Geniza of Old Cairo contain hundreds of letters written by and on behalf of the poor. One can only hope that someday such sources for the Islamic community will surface, perhaps among the Muslim letters on papyrus and on paper being systematically published by German scholar Werner Diem, among others. Then Lev's very important book on charity will have an even broader sociological context for its excellent research.

MARK R. COHEN, *Princeton University*.

ZEMON DAVIS, NATALIE. *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds*. New York: Hill & Wang, 2006. 435 pp. \$30.00 (cloth).

The title of Natalie Zemon Davis's book alludes to Yuhanna al-Asad al-Gharnati (mostly referred to as Ioannes Leo Africanus), the author of an autobiograph-

ical travel narrative published in 1550 by Giovanni Battista Ramusio as *La descrittione dell'Africa*, a book that shaped European visions of Islam and Africa. It was also a source for writers on the history of the Jews. Leo Africanus would be cited in early modern Europe as a source, whether the subject was the nature of the ostrich (as in Sir Thomas Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*) or the character of Mauritania (as in Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*). His personal circumstances, birth in Granada, and early life were believed to lend intellectual authority to the texts he produced after his conversion to Christianity in 1518. Shakespearean scholars (since at least the 1920s) have been discussing the relation between his work and the ambiguities of Othello "the Moor," and Africanists periodically discuss his text as a primary (and often unique) source. Whether we should read the Granadine's work is, therefore, not in question.

The question, rather, is whether in 2006 it is possible to write rather than rewrite on him, or, indeed, rather than translate into English Dietrich Rauschenberger's substantial contribution *Johannes Leo der Afrikaner* (Wiesbaden, 1999). One fundamental justification for Zemon Davis's addition to the large library of existing writings on the subject comes from the insight that previous writings suffer from fragmentation (7). This insight justifies her narrative of the inner springs of the writings of the Granadine convert to Christianity. The underlying message is that previous writers have been insufficiently interested in sex, gender, and the dialogue across religious borders.

There are some exceptions to the fragmentation: Louis Massignon's realization, in 1906, that there is an ambiguity or tension in the *Descrittione* between the (Christian) European frame and the (Islamic) Arabian core would be one example. This basic question still haunts writers on the "Muslim between Worlds." The other exception is the epoch-making discovery, around 1933, by Angela Codazzi of the MS V.5.953 at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Rome. The way was then opened for research that would enable scholars to identify the precise degree of distortion introduced by editorial manipulations.

Zemon Davis is no mere storyteller. Her apparatus is at least as large as the text itself, and the frequently relevant bibliography takes up pages 383–411. Her more hypothetical "reconstructions" are scrupulously rendered in the conditional mode. A list of virtues and vices, sins of commission and omission, in this wide-ranging book that moves between the history of the fork, Maimonides (on the basis of Solomon Munk's *Melanges* of 1859 [here cited from a 1920s edition]), and the Islamic slave trade is not feasible within this space. However, three points about themes that run through the book may be raised. They all concern crossing borders of different kinds. Since some readers of her work see it as speculative and unfinished, it should be emphasized that her considerable attention to Jews in the Renaissance such as Elijah "the Bohur" (or habbahur, but not "Buohur" as on 390) or the (probably Catalano-Aragonese) Sephardi Jew Jacob Mantinus is not unsupported by the evidence. Africanus—who mentions Jews so frequently in his writings—was believed to have been a convert from Judaism. Innovative work on the Bohur, Mantinus, and others exists and has sometimes been ignored, the author preferring, instead, to draw on materials such as "[www.] JewishEncyclopedia.com" (366). Similarly, a discussion of Jewish thought on Divine Names is based on a paperback by Joshua Trachtenberg, as if this were the last word on the subject in 2006.

The second point concerns the Iberian background of Yuhanna al-Asad al-Gharnati. His family was Iberian. The evidence shows al-Gharnati's contacts with Iberian personalities such as Pedro de Cabrera y Bobadilla, scion of a

family of conversos friendly with the “rabbi mayor” of the Jews of Spain, Abraham Senneor. Again, there is no evidence here of familiarity with original research on, for example, the Cabrerias. In Rome, al-Gharnati’s first godfather on his conversion to Christianity was Bernardino Lopez de Carvajal, the Spanish cardinal who (like Egidio da Viterbo and the Prince of Carpi) showed interest in Syriac decades before the Council of Trent. More serious engagement with the history and thought of the religious communities of al-Gharnati’s Iberia might, therefore, have lent some distinction to the work.

Finally, we come to the main thesis about the unity of Africanus’s texts, subsumed in the term “trickster” of the title. This, Zemon Davis claims, is rooted in Islamic and Arabic notions of “trick,” or ruse, as ideal (see 113, 218, 233, 244, 267, etc.). But Africanus was hardly a unique case of an Iberian-born convert in Rome. Rather, his tricks seem like a reenactment of whole groups of such trickster converts. The case of the “translations” of Flavius Mithridates in his *Sermo de Passione Domini* is only one of the glaring absences here. But my main point lies elsewhere: in the footnotes, where Zemon Davis, like her many predecessors, documents amply and patiently another, perhaps contradictory and certainly more enduring, “ruse”—that of the furtive activities of the editors and translators who “change his content and self-presentation” (97). They too were tricksters/editors and translators who needed no inspiration from the *maqamat*, the fatwas, or the Qur’an.

ELEAZAR GUTWIRTH, *Tel Aviv University*.

EL-ROUAYHEB, KHALED. *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500–1800*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 208 pp. \$32.50 (cloth).

Khaled El-Rouayheb’s book is an immensely useful contribution to several fields, including, quite prominently, the history of religion. Meticulously researched, lucidly written, nuanced, and brilliantly conceived, it forthrightly takes on complex issues surrounding the culture of same-sex eroticism that existed in the Arabic-speaking lands of the early modern Ottoman Empire. The homoeroticism of the vast heritage of love poetry passed down to the Turks, Arabs, and Persians of Ottoman times is well known, often mentioned, but seldom studied in any detail and never to the extent of El-Rouayheb’s work.

Although the book will be obligatory reading for students of Ottoman and Arab literature, culture, sociology, intellectual history, the history of sex, and related fields, it most certainly belongs on the bookshelves of those with any interest in the history and theology of Islam or, more generally, in religious approaches to sexuality. In large part, what El-Rouayheb documents is the encounter of Islamic theology with a complex and sensitive sociocultural phenomenon. In the history of this encounter, what stands out most prominently are not attempts by Muslim theologians to condemn or control erotic behaviors but rather their ongoing struggles to find pragmatic ways to allow religion, culture, and social practice to coexist within broadly acceptable limits.

El-Rouayheb’s account begins with a theoretical overview that argues gently for rejecting the essentialist and reductionist assumptions that have dominated the most often cursory attention paid to the topic of Islamic homoeroticism in the past. He points out that homosexuality, as it is understood today, was not a category of thought in the early modern Islamic world. Same-sex erotic relationships were variously imagined, enacted, and regulated on a

cultural landscape marked by ambiguity, multiplicity, and contingency. For example, transgenerational (man-boy) relations were, at the same time, under different circumstances (e.g., class, age, occupation) aestheticized, eroticized, spiritualized, praised, practiced, hidden, flaunted, frowned upon, prohibited, and tolerated. Similarly, the affective, emotional content of these relations was applied broadly to a range of people: patrons, rulers, friends, beloveds of both sexes, casual acquaintances, and strangers.

As the book progresses, the many threads of same-sex erotic relationships are disentangled and examined with reference to examples of theological responses both to specific cases and to more general, theoretical concerns. The picture that emerges contradicts the prevalent notion that there was, in early modern Islamic societies, a yawning gulf between practice and theory with regard to sexual behaviors. What we see is that Islam of this period is not prudish about sex. It considers sexual feelings and behaviors to be natural and positive elements of human experience and social life. It does not value asceticism with regard to sex, nor is it suspicious of sex or sexuality in general. Religious law concerns itself with regulating sexual behavior for the good of the community and is far from monolithic in what it sees as unlawful and what it recommends as punishments for unlawful behavior. Moreover, Muslim jurists most often adhered to the principle of reducing wherever possible the severity of the divinely ordained (*hadd*) punishments for illicit sexual behaviors by introducing mitigating factors such as the possibility of confusion based on the resemblance (*shubhah*) of one act to another, for example, the resemblance between paying a prostitute and giving a dowry to a bride, and customs such as the principle of "concealing" or "veiling" (*satr*), which suggests that sexual offenses should be overlooked when their revelation and punishment would themselves be pornographic.

El-Rouayheb has done extensive research in original sources, and his book contains a wealth of translations of legal opinions by Muslim jurists, the interpretations of Qur'anic commentators, the speculations of theologians, and the writings of Islamic mystics and literati. The breadth of these opinions gives English-speaking readers glimpses into a broad range of thought on sex and sexuality that are unavailable in translation anywhere else. One fascinating example is the open discussion of sex in paradise, which highlights the Muslim theologians' acceptance of sex and sexuality as essential and eternally enduring aspects of human existence. Where the study ranges beyond the interests of mainstream sharia theology and touches on the theology of Islamic mysticism, he does not attempt an exposition of the vast and complex theology of Islamic mysticism but rather does an excellent job of showing how the mystical interpretation of the erotic is another significant thread in fabric of Muslim same-sex eroticism. This is an important book by an excellent scholar.

WALTER ANDREWS, *University of Washington*.

GADE, ANNA M. *Perfection Makes Practice: Learning, Emotion, and the Recited Qur'ân in Indonesia*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004. xii+348 pp. \$55.00 (cloth).

Although few claim Arabic as their mother tongue, Muslim Indonesians have long been renowned for the skill and beauty of their Qur'an recitation. As Indonesia experienced a wave of Islamic revitalization in the 1990s, a broad-based

movement for Qur'an recitation spread, with recitation circles blossoming everywhere from kindergartens and bank offices to state motor vehicle bureaus.

In this vigorously interdisciplinary book, Anna Gade sets out to examine Qur'an recitation as an instrument and valued end of Islamic piety. A student of Islamic studies fluent in Arabic and Indonesian, Gade conducted dissertation fieldwork during 1996–97, spending most of her time in the city of Makassar, South Sulawesi. Indonesians know Makassar as a stronghold of a conservative and politicized Islamic revivalism, one that at times has expressed itself in armed rebellion. Although she describes the social setting for individual performances, Gade steers clear of the politics and contestation highlighted in most recent studies of Islamic revival in Indonesia. The author directs her attention instead to "the educative, lived, and psychological aspects of practices of the recited Qur'ân among ordinary Indonesian Muslims, highlighting its centrality in personal projects of piety" (25), as well as to its pivotal role in Muslim projects of "community-building" (2).

Some students of Islam in Indonesia may be surprised by this relative sidelining of social history, not least of all in a province with as tumultuous a past and uncertain a future as South Sulawesi. The materials on which Gade focuses, however, are subtly theorized, deeply interesting, and original. Gade's animating concern is piety, an issue that has moved to the center of discussion in recent treatments of Islamic movements in sociology and anthropology. Gade wants to understand piety, however, not as a political instrument or a "top down imposition of ideological interest" (2) but as something that originates in actors' encounters with the Qur'an itself. As they bring their voices and affect into conformity with the ideals of Qur'an recitation, individuals experience a "compelling pull" they "may not have anticipated" (4). Reinforced by normative guidelines on recitation technique, theological commentaries on proper student bearing, and the social context of performance, the cumulative effect of these individual encounters is a "widespread system of continuous motivated involvement" (4) that "generates escalating dynamics of ongoing religious engagement" (5).

Students of social theory will recognize parallels between Gade's actor-focused methodology and recent attempts in anthropology and religious studies to highlight social agency and person-centered experience. Far more than most of these analysts, however, Gade is eager to push the exploration of affective dimensions of religious experience to the fore. In the most theoretically ambitious section of this book, Gade takes the reader through recent research in psychological learning studies, anthropological theories of emotion, and post-Geertzian analyses of ritual "moods and motivations" to present a thoughtfully synthetic model of ritual and subjectivity. Positing emotion as "separate from both cognition and embodiment" (50), Gade's model understands Qur'an recitation in terms of "escalating engagement . . . by way of ongoing, affective encounter" (48), whose Geertzian "moods and motivations" are "not merely an effect but also a cause of religious resurgence" (51).

In highlighting the irreducibility of religious experience and presenting a psychocultural framework for understanding it, Gade has made an important contribution to the interdisciplinary study of ritual and Islam. Her bold ideas on emotion may remain controversial, not least of all because they depart from pluralist models of culture, cognition, and emotion now popular in psychiatric anthropology. The book nonetheless succeeds at placing emotion at the center of ritual analysis. Over the course of her discussion, Gade also provides stu-

dents of Islamic studies with one of the finest accounts currently available of the history, techniques, and normative culture of Qur'an recitation.

Focused on developing a model of individual engagement with ritual forms, this book says less about the way state-mandated religious education has contributed to public interest in Qur'anic recitation; it also says less about the broader effects of ritual participation on "community building" and public ethical formation. If the debates currently raging among pious Indonesian Muslims are any indication, it appears that the public-cultural entailments of participation in Qur'an recitation are far less specific, and notably less consensual, than its effects on personal bearing and vocal technique. Herein lies one of the great paradoxes of Qur'an-inspired piety, a paradox that cannot be captured through the study of ritual engagement alone. For individual actors, however, the power and emotion of Qur'an recitation remains, and this book offers an original and theoretically important account of its subjective dynamics.

ROBERT W. HEFNER, *Boston University*.

DUBUISSON, DANIEL. *The Western Construction of Religion: Myths, Knowledge, and Ideology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. x+244 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).

Daniel Dubuisson argues that the concept "religion" was produced in the West and imposed upon the anthropological study of human cultures in such a way as to ensure and maintain the dominance of the culture of its production. This is an unexceptional thesis, but the book is "not merely one more in this line," according to cover notes by Robert Segal. Dubuisson expounds his argument in illuminating detail, citing sources from the classics, from modern anthropology, sociology, and history of religions. The latter he deems to have so failed to transcend its Western origins that "only an incredible ethnocentric illusion would authorize us to recognize it as still having a true scientific vocation today" (5). "The religious is what the West considers to be religious based on its own religious experience" (10), and the history of religions, having imposed its own codes and points of reference, is incapable of discovering anything but its own image. Religion is in fact the West's most characteristic and most valued concept, without equivalent in other cultures. It is the legitimate daughter of Christianity, and questions relative to it are exclusively Western. However, facts "are not in themselves religious in the sense that they are endowed with some kind of specific *sui generis* quality" (15).

Dubuisson suggests that the concept of religion be replaced with a term "that would no longer be defined on the basis of Western experience alone" (200). Everything we call religious can be subsumed in the "all-encompassing category of cosmographic formations" (17). This substitution fulfills a triple objective. It provides a general concept that encompasses all the facts "we habitually call religious" and includes all facts that are excluded from this category "on the basis of Christian theological criteria"; it will stimulate anthropology "to concern itself with the human condition such as it is, and not only such as it represents itself to be" in the West, and it renders obsolete debates in the history of religions that are relevant only to Western culture (199–200). These objectives are to some extent admirable motivations based on undoubtedly true premises. However, the argument is so marked with misrepresentation,

oversimplification, omission, self-contradiction, and circularity of logic as to seriously weaken its conclusions.

The absence of a precise equivalent for "religion" in other cultures is taken to establish the absence of any equivalent, but Dubuisson's recognition of universal processes of narrative world formation restores a universal functional equivalent of "religion." The suggested substitution is only an improvement if "religion" is restricted to a very specific Christian theological understanding, which has long been marginalized in the academic and social scientific study of religions. This is one of the circularities of Dubuisson's argument. His scornful attitude can be maintained only by neglect of, for example, the fact that worldview analysis (Ninian Smart, *Worldviews: Cross-Cultural Explorations of Human Beliefs* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1995]) as a corrective to theological determination was implied by Edmund Husserl's understanding of *weltanschauung*, was specifically proposed by Smart (in *Worldviews*), and was further developed by William Paden (*Religious Worlds* [Boston, 1988]). None of this receives mention in Dubuisson's proposal of "cosmographic formation." If "religion" is not entirely restricted to this narrow, theologically determined concept, then translating non-Western cultural practices into "cosmographic formations" is an imposition no less distorting than translating them into "religions," and it is no more likely to give access to "the human condition such as it is" (199).

Only by ignoring all scholarship that belies his portrayal can Dubuisson maintain his stereotype of the Western academy as an homogeneous institution in which "no doubts, no reservations are expressed" (54) concerning the existence of religion in this narrow sense in most, if not all, human cultures. But what of Wilfred Cantwell Smith (*The Meaning and End of Religion* [London, 1963]) or Russell McCutcheon (*Manufacturing Religion* [New York, 1977])? Dubuisson's scorn for the Western academy is unrestrained: "Of all human phenomena, the most essential is that of life. Academia therefore takes no interest in it" (208).

Dubuisson anticipates criticism and attempts to disarm it by suggesting that "feverish resistance" to his work will result from the desire to retain the concept of religion with all the privileges that it confers on the West along with the theological implication that "religion" has a supernatural source (200). However, the book's thesis that what we call religion is a human behavior susceptible to natural description and explanation is not seriously disputed in the field. Its attack on Western imperialism and cultural hegemony would be seen as laudable by most scholars. The book could enlighten those who believe religion to be an entity *in res* sent by a divine being or Western scholarship to have been uniformly altruistic and rational. Others should read it with reserve. BRYAN RENNIE, *Westminster College, Pennsylvania*.

KENT, ELIZA. *Converting Women: Gender and Protestant Christianity in Colonial South India*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 315 pp. \$49.95 (cloth).

In this beautifully written volume, Eliza Kent discusses the effect of conversion to Christianity on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century South Indian attitudes about (and treatment of) women. *Converting Women's* most controversial claim, which is nonetheless one for which Kent provides ample evidence, is that this effect was not always, from the perspective of modern Western feminism, a positive one. Rather, Kent argues, conversion to Christianity entailed in many cases the restriction of women's spheres of activity and influence.

In the three chapters of part 1, Kent sets the scene by discussing the history of Christianity in the region, the emergence of the Christian women's missionary movement, and, finally, the various attempts by members of the Nadar (formerly Shanar) caste, on which much of *Converting Women* focuses, to claim for themselves a more respectable social position.

The interaction of missionaries and Indians, both Christian and Hindu, produced what Kent calls a "discourse of respectability" (4). This discourse was dialogical, in the sense that both missionary and indigenous gender ideologies were involved in its development. Nevertheless, the most innovative of Kent's assertions is that there was in fact an astonishing degree of convergence on matters of femininity among (1) local elites, (2) upwardly mobile Indian Christians, and (3) foreign missionaries. Each of these groups privileged in their women behaviors that exemplified "restraint, containment, and orderliness" over those that suggested "lack of self-control, spontaneity, and chaos" (9).

Lower-caste women in South India, as in other parts of the subcontinent, generally enjoyed a greater degree of mobility and a wider sphere of influence than their high-caste counterparts. For example, lower-caste women frequently worked with their husbands in agricultural fields or on palm plantations (the Nadars' traditional occupation was toddy tapping). Moreover, lower-caste communities had fewer restrictions on divorce and remarriage than did elite Indian groups.

But these greater "freedoms" were in fact a mark of their low status. The ability of a community to control its women and to protect their honor, especially in terms of sexuality, was an index of their social status—the greater the ability to control and protect, the higher the status. The Victorian preference for monogamy and female domesticity, influenced as it was by the notion of "separate spheres," therefore tracked relatively closely with elite Indian notions of ideal womanhood. Despite (or perhaps because of) their lower-caste roots, Indian Christians generally accepted elite Indian articulations of desirable femininity. Therefore, Kent suggests, their willingness to restrict the mobility and-conjugal rights of women must be seen not only as an acceptance of missionary norms but also, and perhaps more importantly, as an attempt to assert a higher social status according to indigenous criteria.

The economic standing of formerly lower-caste Indian Christians had improved dramatically, making such a claim of higher status possible and plausible. (This economic improvement rested in part on the professionalization of Christian men, which incidentally allowed for and even encouraged the domestication of Indian women.) Christianization therefore resembled, Kent argues, the process of Sanskritization, studied so well by M. N. Srinivas and others, whereby a community that has gained economic and/or political status adopts the deities, beliefs, practices, attitudes, and mores of the locally dominant caste in order to assert its higher ritual and social status.

The assertion, common at the time and in many subsequent histories of Christian missions in India, that Christianity "liberated" Indian women is therefore, Kent argues, incomplete. The problem is that those making the assertion employ what I have elsewhere called an "asymmetrical assessment" and judge the "progress" of Indian Christian women by comparing them with upper-caste Indian women (among whom practices such as purdah, prohibitions on divorce, and enforced widowhood were widespread) rather than with other lower-caste Indians (among whom those same practices were virtually unknown).

In separate chapters, Kent discusses the effects of the ongoing "discourse of

respectability" on Indian Christian notions of domesticity, conjugality, and sartorial style. Much of the material is innovative, and even when Kent discusses familiar material she brings to it a fresh perspective. For example, in chapter 5 Kent revisits the well-known nineteenth-century "breast cloth controversy," during which lower-caste Indian Christian women began covering their torsos—a right they had traditionally been denied—in a manner like that of local upper-caste women. According to prevailing cultural norms of the time, women and men both were expected to leave their chests exposed in front of deities, rulers, and members of higher castes. So while missionaries interpreted the breast cloth as a sign of modesty, local elites viewed it as an affront. Historians have generally asserted that the controversy was about status—who had it and who got to decide?—but Kent suggests that it may have had more to do with the desire of Indian Christians to indicate to others, particularly higher-caste men who sometimes assumed *droit du seigneur* with regard to lower-caste women, that Indian Christian women were off limits.

Kent's analysis rests on a thorough investigation of archival and published materials, and the story she tells is both engaging and convincing, if perhaps of necessity—since the period under investigation lies just beyond the reach of oral history—skewed slightly toward the kind of elite and literate Christians who tend to show up in and produce such materials. Nevertheless, *Converting Women* is an impressive and important piece of research that should be on the shelves of anyone interested in conversion, gender, Indian Christianity, or South Indian social history.

CHAD M. BAUMAN, *Butler University*.

NORGET, KRISTIN. *Days of Death, Days of Life: Ritual in the Popular Culture of Oaxaca*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006. xii+319 pp. \$67.50 (cloth); \$27.50 (paper).

Kristin Norget, an anthropologist at McGill University, presents a fine study of Mexican popular religion, focusing on the rites surrounding death in a humble urban community in Oaxaca, capital of the eponymous state. Her book describes and explores details of these rituals, their importance to the people, and how they manifest local philosophy and spirituality. She delivers a responsible ethnography and a vivid portrait of the community.

Norget discusses national and local, historical and contemporary notions of the Mexican subject and various iterations of "imagined community," including national stereotypes and archetypes by Mexican intellectuals. She considers how race, class, and gender influence the self-identification of individuals and groups, analyzing the politics underlying what people say and how they live. The material reaped from her interviews exemplifies her stated intention to interpret and reflect on what she observes; she seems to have guided her informants skillfully to ponder their words and deeds.

She also exposes and examines efforts to define "the Mexican," rooting her analysis in history, literature, popular-culture "texts," and published studies. A key thread in that definition includes Mexicans' attitudes toward death. She conveys how Oaxacans "use ritual and festivals and other sites of commemoration to affirm a relation to a past, a future, and a present community and to mark themselves off as members of a distinct community" (13). Her respect for her informants is patent, including in her consideration of how they rely

on death rituals to form and confirm their sense of self as members of an idealized community. An example is in her recognition that death to them was more than a discrete event, a complex social process through which the decedent left the living and joined the dead, a "social poetics of death" (16). She returns repeatedly to the realization that the altruistic behavior women manifest through this process—accompanying corpse and bereaved, offering food and drink—builds a communal solidarity that unquestionably includes the dead. Norget has an important insight about this: "Ritual had an ontological role; it was bound up with the very idea of being, both individually and collectively" (154). She sees that death rituals are "cultural mnemonics for the conservation of a certain aesthetic sensibility, part of a shared experience of life and death" (168). These details exemplify her capacity to understand significant implications of the practices she observed.

Her awareness that popular-religious rituals turn death into an opportunity to regenerate the community leads her to see that, as Mexican writers (though not cited) have observed, "life and death are reciprocals, not antagonists" (114). Related to this is her perception that any given fiesta exemplifies the celebrants' temporary realization "of a fantasy of plenitude on earth, rooted in a concrete place, time, and set of relationships" (218).

I was pleased that Norget theorized, as part of the Oaxacan (and Mexican) imaginary, the Santa Muerte, a popular saint that has emerged in subaltern urban circles recently. Unsanctioned by the Catholic Church, she is represented as a cloaked skeleton, which Norget considers along with elements of the devotees' gender theories. She also devotes a large part of *Days of Death*, *Days of Life* to the effects of tourism and globalization on some manifestations of Days of the Dead observances (Norget is critical of sales pitches that seek to attract tourists and show little understanding of the commemoration or of Oaxaca's popular cultures).

Norget's style is amenable and clear, uncluttered by jargon, though sometimes it is unnecessarily repetitive. The black-and-white illustrations, mostly photographic, help show the reader unfamiliar with the Mexican ways of death what the author witnessed. It would have been good if Columbia University Press had included a color signature. It would have been better had the press hired a Hispanophone or bilingual copy editor to correct Spanish pronouns, gender, and diacritics, especially critical in proper names; to rectify spelling ("Guadalupe" for Guadalupe); and also to check some translations that seem less than accurate. Occasionally Norget presents as common knowledge material that has been published in other works included in her bibliography without citation, a questionable practice. *Days of Death*, *Days of Life* will be useful to scholars of history or phenomenology of religion, urban and subaltern cultures, popular religion and culture and to those interested in rituals of death and mourning in contemporary, urban Mexico, while it is still perfectly appropriate for the educated lay reader.

JUANITA GARCIGODOY, *Macalester College*.

POEWE, KARLA. *New Religions and the Nazis*. New York: Routledge, 2006. xii+218 pp. \$26.95 (cloth).

Karla Poewe, professor emeritus of anthropology at the University of Calgary, has tackled with *New Religions and the Nazis* a problem of immense significance.

The history of non-Christian religions in Germany during the interwar period has unfortunately found little interest among religious studies scholars as well as among secular historians. Even worse, the interpretation of religious movements apart from Christianity becoming influential in the first half of the twentieth century relies to a great extent on contemporary works written in favor of Christian apologetics. Therefore, Poewe's study is a welcome contribution to the field, especially since its author has familiarized herself with the relevant primary sources during several research stays in Germany. This is particularly important in the case of Jakob Wilhelm Hauer, the "Führer" of the German Faith Movement, which had been the main pagan organization in Nazi Germany. Hauer, a former missionary to India, taught history of religions and indology at the University of Tübingen before he left the church and embarked on the founding of a new religion. Because Hauer was one of Germany's foremost pagans, Poewe rightly places him in the foreground of her investigation.

Following older motives of church criticism of pagan idolatry, Poewe attributes the emergence of paganism to an exaggerated and politically deluded liberalism. "It was Hauer's and other Nazis' radical liberalism that led them to National Socialism," she states (20). In applying this argument to the political field, Poewe arrives at the conclusion that National Socialism and Christianity had nothing in common. On the contrary, pagan heathendom ought to be understood as the Third Reich's genuine ideological substructure. Therefore it could be little wonder that the Nazis wanted to rid Germany of Christianity (172). Although Poewe avoids speaking explicitly about her aims, the course of her argument clearly shows that she intends to defend Christianity against the accusation of having had links with National Socialism. Poewe's assumption of an absolute antagonism between these two archenemies leads her to a number of serious faults and misapprehensions. Her explanation that the "Köngener Bund," a small Protestant group of Bible-reading juveniles headed by Hauer in the 1920s, has to be comprehended as a forerunner organization of the German Faith Movement demonstrates the failing of such an approach. Although it is factually accurate to relate the Köngener Bund to the German Youth Movement and to the many *Bünde* cropping up in Weimar Germany, it is totally misleading to blame this tiny and insignificant Bible circle for having engendered the Third Reich's most important pagan organization. In particular, chapter 3, "Hauer and the *Bünde*" (35–49), illustrates the failings caused by a teleological interpretation "towards National Socialism," as a subchapter reads (43–46).

Many studies of the historiography of the church struggle describe the religious altercations of the National Socialist period in terms of an ideological warfare. In this perspective the Christian churches fought a heroic struggle for survival against a totalitarian regime that disseminated paganism as an anti-Christian counterideology. *New Religions and the Nazis* follows that interpretative scheme. Consequently, it disregards the great many organizational, administrative, and other relations between state and church in existence. Far more than 90 percent of the German populace remained in the church throughout the time of the Third Reich. The overwhelming majority of Germans felt anything but a spiritual need to join one of the pagan associations. Hence Poewe is forced to exaggerate the number of pagan believers considerably (97–98). It is a widespread fault in the history of religions to adopt the inflated figures provided by minority groups as well as by their adversaries. In reality, those

factions constituting the German Faith Movement did not exceed more than several tens of thousands. Compared to the German Christians Movement, with more than five hundred thousand members (Germany had roughly 60 million church members altogether), organized paganism must have appeared relatively small in size. To avoid deliberating on the Christian character of the German society, Poewe tries to overemphasize and generalize pagan outsider positions. The consequence of such a view becomes evident from a remark made in the introduction. In it Poewe declares that German Christians, correctly understood, "were not Christians but pagans" (8). Then, indeed, paganism must transmute into a universal threat.

Poewe's essentialist understanding of Christianity generates a picture of paganism as the antithesis of Christianity in almost every regard. Disagreeing with the mainstream of scholarly works on anti-Semitic prejudices, Poewe fervently neglects any Christian influence on National Socialist Jew hatred (7–8, 14–15, 142). Quite the reverse, she holds paganism accountable for the anti-Semitism of the Nazis and finally responsible for the Holocaust. The recent trend to put the churches on the side of the victims is getting fresh support from Poewe's examination. But by regarding Christians and Jews as equal targets of Nazi persecution, she plays down Nazi anti-Semitism, which then becomes a secondary phenomenon subsequent to the harassment of Christianity. A sentence like "National Socialists knew that being against Christianity was the most authentic and deepest form of anti-Semitism" (7) creates more confusion than the author probably realizes. Writing the history of religions as history of religious ideas materializes in the case of *New Religions and the Nazis* as a means of reproducing religious value judgments on a higher level of abstraction. This methodological inadequacy reduces the value of Poewe's study significantly. Nevertheless, it contains a lot of information very likely unknown to many readers. It offers the opportunity to consider the important question of how paganism developed an influence in the German society and to what depth its impact went. There can be no doubt that some Nazi leaders had a zealous inclination toward an anti-Christian pagan worldview that is especially visible in the SS's pagan tendencies. Poewe's book provides a strong argument for scholars of religions to address the complex relationship between paganism, Christianity, and National Socialism.

HORST JUNGINGER, *University of Tübingen*.

HINZE, BRADFORD W. *Practices of Dialogue in the Roman Catholic Church: Aims and Obstacles, Lessons and Laments*. New York: Continuum, 2006. ix+326 pp. \$39.95 (cloth).

It may seem to many observers that Catholicism and dialogue are unlikely partners, but Bradford Hinze's latest book comprehensively undermines any such assumptions. Nine of the ten chapters of this exhaustively researched work examine various kinds of dialogue, beginning from the local level and the work of parish pastoral councils and then moving upward and outward to examine dialogues with and among the U.S. bishops, the Rome Synod of Bishops, ecumenical conversations among different Christian churches, and, finally, the complex issue of interreligious dialogue. In each chapter Hinze lays out with admirable fairness the origins of the dialogue, its successes and failures, and concludes with a discussion of issues that have arisen from the history

of the dialogue. The tenth chapter takes what is evidently a preliminary synthetic look at problems and progress under the headings of "Laments" and "Lessons Learned."

While Hinze's work establishes dialogue as an important component of the Catholic Church over the last forty years, the picture it paints is one of dialogue under stress. In particular, the author comes back time and again to the insistence in canon law that such things as parish or diocesan pastoral councils, diocesan synods, and even synods of bishops are "consultative only" in nature and have no formal deliberative role in the church's teaching or governance. He is candid too in his discussions of the ways in which various bishops both helped and hindered *A Call to Action* and the Common Ground Initiative. Hinze's painstaking analysis of the efforts of the Adrian Dominican Sisters to satisfy Vatican concerns over their understanding of authority is particularly illuminating. Women's religious orders, as Hinze rightly points out, have been in the forefront of developing ways of establishing fruitful dialogue in the years since Vatican II. Hinze's tale makes one cheer on the diplomacy of the sisters, weep for the frustrations they may have felt, and wonder at the pettifogging bureaucracy of the Roman Curia. The chapters on the Rome Synod of Bishops and on ecumenical and interreligious dialogue bring out even more clearly the two competing dialogical and hierarchical ecclesiologies. Hinze treats them with some success as two schools of dialogue, one classical and personalist, one more liberal. Then, in a devastating discussion of "classical" forms of dialogue in his final chapter, Hinze makes an effective case that the Socratic dialogue that the classicists evidently want to use as a model "serves to commend a hierarchical arrangement that may consult with theologians, representatives of the clergy, women religious, and the laity but is not required to do so." Platonic dialogues, in essence, "are not intended to chronicle real practices of dialogue as much as they are using a philosophical and aesthetic genre for conveying the philosopher's truth already known, or as an imaginative device for the philosopher to explore dimensions of his or her own position in order to deepen it" (261).

There are two respects in which this deeply important discussion might have been improved. First, most of the attention has gone to occasions of formal dialogue, and much of the dialogue in the church is not conducted in this way. What about the dialogue, for example, among the many thousands of members of Voice of the Faithful (an important Catholic lay organization almost entirely missing from this book), *Call to Action* (not to be confused with the 1970s episcopal initiative of the same name), and Futurechurch on the liberal side, or Catholics United for the Faith and Faithful Voice on the more conservative end? Admittedly, they are mostly not in dialogue with the hierarchy, but they are certainly in dialogue among themselves and cannot be left entirely out of consideration. Further, it would be enormously helpful though quite difficult to include the extensive dialogue that takes place on Internet blogs. Blogging is a phenomenon that is changing the character of American political debate and it may well come to have a similar impact on the church. A second, more theoretical gripe is in a way a compliment to the transparently clear presentation of the debates. Why must Hinze begin and end with tours through methodological theories? It is entirely conceivable that Gadamer or Habermas or whoever lies somewhere in Hinze's formative years and therefore may have influenced him, but I don't see their influence on this book. Invoking these German theological shades may be a species of academic deference,

but it can also be obfuscatory. Hinze's work is too good to need to perch on the shoulders of these ponderous giants.

PAUL LAKELAND, *Fairfield University*.

DELROSSO, JEANA. *Writing Catholic Women: Contemporary International Girlhood Narratives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. ix+203 pp. \$65.00 (cloth).

The agenda of Jeana DelRosso's book is to reconcile Catholicism and feminism through an investigation into girlhood narratives by contemporary women writers. Aiming at exploring those women writers' multivalent, ambiguous, and even internally conflicted attitudes toward Catholicism in its complex, multifaceted manifestations as an institution, a culture, and a category of difference, in chapter 1 DelRosso not only establishes the structuring principle of the book by adopting an inclusive definition of Catholic literature but also explains her focus on Catholic girlhood narratives as "highly charged sites of their differing gestures towards the religion" (6). DelRosso proceeds to examine the intersections of religion, gender, and literature within the intricately interweaving web of other related issues, such as "sexuality and madness, ethnicity and colonialism, race and class, mysticism and spirituality, humor and comedy" (6), which are consecutively treated from chapter 2 to chapter 6.

Among those thematic reading chapters, chapter 2 is particularly well researched and cogently argued. Besides resorting to feminist theology and feminist theory in general, DelRosso gleans insights from literary texts to argue that against the virgin/whore divide that characterizes Catholic womanhood, women need to integrate sexuality and spirituality—although this integration used to be regarded as madness—to achieve their full humanity. The author's recognition of the subtle role played by Catholicism as both the source of female insanity and its treatment contributes to the strength of this chapter. DelRosso points out that the use of Catholic elements such as sainthood in contemporary women's texts offers the female characters a chance to challenge the notion of female insanity—that is, to transcend the sane/insane binary in traditional religion as well as in modern medical diagnosis—and enables women writers "to write texts that resist such dualistic discourses while continuing to complicate women's relationships to Catholicism" (74).

Chapter 3 reads girlhood narratives by international women writers as sites of feminist awareness of the tension between Catholicism and the colonized cultures to present the image of the church as both oppressive and liberative. Chapter 4 concentrates on literary representation of parochial education for young black girls in the Americas. Within this limited scope, DelRosso observes that, due to the rampancy of racism, these narratives exhibit a negative attitude toward Catholicism. However, the author's primary goal of explicating the image of the church in its full complexity and ambiguity, although significant in itself, somehow grants only constrained space for the theoretical exploration of the intersection of gender and Catholicism with colonialism, ethnicity, race, and class.

The next two chapters discuss particular modes of writing as ways of empowerment. Chapter 5 celebrates the possibility of destabilizing sociopolitical reality for the authorization of women as provided by Catholic magical realism, which synthesizes both non-Christian religions and Catholic notions of grace, sainthood, and miracle. Chapter 6 explores the confluence of humor, gender,

and Catholicism in search of the political weight of the lightness of laughter. Acknowledging the contribution of literature as more than passive representation of complexities, DelRosso proclaims that "perhaps the potential for change that feminists envision for the Catholic church can only come from a kind of religious syncretism, an opening up of the church's teachings to new (or old?) thought and fresh visions. And perhaps humor can play a large part in that change" (167).

In sum, displaying the virtues of rigorous and far-ranging research, nuanced reading, and strenuous attentiveness to the interrelatedness of various social issues, DelRosso presents to her reader a thoroughly contextualized and carefully balanced image of the living presence of Catholicism in contemporary women's life, deconstructed and reconstructed in a feminist light and contributory to current gender, ethnic, and cultural studies. DelRosso's book is highly recommendable to students of religion, women's studies, and contemporary literature. Moreover, this book has opened a new field for the study of religion and literature in particular, given her discussion of women writers who do not even identify themselves as Catholic but nonetheless engage with the religion. Besides her timely critique of the marginalization of religion in academia and her persistent resistance against dualistic, monolithic discourse, no less valuable is DelRosso's incisive reading of literary works, which amounts to an extensive, although not exhaustive, survey of contemporary Catholic literature by women writers of diverse ethnic, cultural, and national backgrounds. However, if I churlishly have to point out one minor imperfection, I would suggest that a brief introduction to at least some repeatedly analyzed texts and authors might help her readers to better orient themselves in this beautiful labyrinth of pluralities and ambiguities.

ZHANGE NI, *Chicago, Illinois.*

BIRD, ROBERT. *Andrei Rublev*. BFI Film Classics. London: BFI Publishing, 2004. 87 pp. \$14.95 (paper).

While the Western Christian confessions have had significant cinematic expressions since the silent period (in major films by Griffith, Dreyer, Bresson, Rossellini, Bergman, Hitchcock, Scorsese, and others), Eastern Orthodoxy had played almost no role in the great films, aside from being the object of vilification in some early Soviet masterpieces, until the release in 1966 of Andrei Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev*. What is surprising is that such an instance occurred so early, that is, thirty years before the collapse of the Soviet Union. The relationship of Tarkovsky's film to the Soviet film industry in the 1960s and to Russian Orthodox spirituality is complex and ambiguous. Robert Bird's monograph lays out the historical and interpretive contours of these matters more effectively and authoritatively than anything else in English.

Approximately a quarter of the projected 360 books in the BFI Film Classics series have been published. Like most of them, Bird's short book is admirably concise, well documented, effectively illustrated, and eminently useful. It is, in fact, one of the best achievements so far of this admirable project. *Andrei Rublev* is perhaps the most difficult film to which the BFI have devoted a monograph: Bird illuminates it with authority and rigor. The first of his four chapters knowledgeably situates the status of Andrei Rublev's art in Soviet culture at the time of the film's inception. The second brings considerable clarity to the

story of the film's agonized production in which the director was forced to make numerous revisions and deletions, which were, however, "restored" in different versions in the film's afterlife of video and DVD. In his central third chapter Bird works his way through the prologue, seven episodes, and epilogue of the 205-minute-long film.

His attention to the nuances of cinematic style is acute, as when he writes: "The camera may seem to *sympathize* with a character for a time, but it invariably switches to another character or takes on a life of its own. There are also few establishing shots to give a sense of the objective space in which the viewer can array events and characters. Instead, the meaning of a shot is liable to remain suspended until the viewer ascribes it to a particular subject and places it precisely in the narrative" (41). Scrutiny of this sort brings him to one of his more original and productive insights: that Andrei is "surrounded by examples of imperfect vision" (46). So, in Bird's reading, the burden of the intricate second episode becomes the indirect representation of the icon painter's (and tangentially the viewer's) visual education. Later, when the author challenges the interpretation of the so-called flashbacks of episode 4 published by Vida Johnson and Graham Petrie in their very useful and massive book, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), his careful focus on detail persuasively supports his argument.

The compression dictated by the series' format can be felt most intensely in the final chapter, where Bird tries to squeeze into sixteen pages (with twenty-one illustrations) his thoughts on Tarkovsky's relationship to film history, to the history of both western European and Russian religious painting, to the theology of the icon, and even on the filmmaker's apocalypticism. His usually lucid language suffers from such condensation. He approaches opacity when he writes: "The basis of this innovatory style is the use of the camera to suspend the event in the act of its being regarded by others, which undermines the subject's sovereign viewpoint. . . . The lack of a clear centre within the cinematic world forms the act of viewership into a bearing of witness, in the sense of both sympathetic observation and testimonial narrative which must continue after the collapse of the event" (68). One regrets that so astute a viewer did not have more pages to elaborate and clarify his analysis. In the same chapter, his extremely suggestive remarks on the application of Pavel Florensky's writings on icons to the thematics of the film and his even more tantalizing allusions to the filmmaker's still untranslated speech "A Discourse on the Apocalypse" fuels a hope that he might someday write a more expansive work on Tarkovsky's cinema.

P. ADAMS SITNEY, *Princeton University*.

GIVENS, JEAN A. *Observation and Image-Making in Gothic Art*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xiv+231 pp. \$80.00 (cloth).

During the thirteenth century, so the conventional narrative of art history tells us, Western image makers rediscovered nature's splendor. The stylized patterns of Romanesque capitals softened and swelled into the leaves and petals of local flora; the contorted, elastic bodies splayed across twelfth-century portals assumed normal human proportions and volumes; and texts both practical and intellectual grew replete with pictures substantiating what words might fail to

convey. At the same time, translations of Aristotelian natural philosophy likely influenced the novel production of pictures that made explicit truth claims—most famously, Villard de Honnecourt's drawing of a lion, which, despite its visible compass marks, the artist boasted to have drawn *al vif*. What did Villard and his contemporaries mean when they affirmed an adherence to natural models? And what did these *ymagiers*, like those who carved botanical specimens in churches and monasteries, imagine the viewers to gain from such visual specificity?

Jean Givens's new book poses these important—and long-vexed—questions afresh, offering some novel insights and opening doors to future research. After an introductory overview of scholarly opinions on "Gothic Naturalism," in which Givens traces the literature's fluctuating emphases on artists' attention to real-world appearances and their reliance on idealizing conventions—a leitmotif of the present book—chapter 2 ("The Testimony of Sight") introduces us to contemporary commentators: Villard, Matthew Paris, Gervase of Canterbury, and William of Rubruck, each of whom asserted that primary observation formed the basis of their visual or verbal representations of real-world creatures, places, and things. By taking seriously these authors' insistence on firsthand observation, even when the pictorial evidence appears to belie it, Givens demonstrates the importance accorded visual communication in high medieval culture. Why such issues assumed their unprecedented force in the thirteenth century, however, is a question left tantalizingly open. The author's frequent reliance on the German polymath Albertus Magnus as a theoretical voice makes one wish for a closer examination of intellectual trends in the universities as well as of any sustained attention to German sculptural monuments, which often display a deeper engagement with natural appearances than the canonical French and English works that take center stage here.

Chapter 3 ("Images and Information") returns us to medieval botany, as Givens sets her foliate carvings into dialogue with drawn versions in illustrated herbals and descriptions of plants in scientific texts, often highlighting the points of divergence in the respective artists' approach to natural detail. Given her stated concern with the creative process, it is curious that the author does not analyze the methods of manufacture of stone sculpture versus manuscript painting; after all, the vast differences in artists' depictions of natural things may be less indicative of their attitudes toward models than of the limitations or freedoms of their respective mediums—not to mention the functions their works were meant to fulfill. The latter question forms the basis of chapter 4 ("The Uses of Likeness"), a rich case study of the carved foliage at Southwell Abbey that situates the botanical ornamentation within the horizon of expectations of its monastic audience. Going beyond conventional symbolic interpretations of the various floral species, Givens highlights their pragmatic roles—for example in healing, agriculture, forestry, and territorial demarcations—and usefully compares the carvings with the lively depictions of animals in a charter delimiting the hunting rights of an English nobleman; here, naturalistic portrayal, with its presumption of viewer recognition and response, served as a mechanism of social definition and control.

The argument for the social value of naturalism forms one of Givens's most original and provocative points—though one suspects that for the images' original viewers, steeped in symbolic, typological ways of viewing nature, the Christian inflections long assigned to specific flowers and beasts would have carried no less weight than their more mundane associations. As we are reminded in

the final chapter ("Models and Copies"), even the most seemingly accurate plants and animals in Gothic art depart from their natural referents, blossoming more symmetrically or cavorting more daintily than those in the real world. Following Ernst Gombrich and Otto Pächt, who both loom large throughout the volume, the author posits such divergences as a problem rooted in creative practices; by analyzing artists' adherence to or rejection of natural irregularities and asymmetries, she seeks to discover whether image makers relied primarily on firsthand observation or on prior artistic models as they shaped their materials.

Sensibly enough, Givens concludes that both options coexisted, that "naturalism was a choice available to thirteenth-century craftsmen" (168). It seems unfair, however, to expect medieval artists to have limited themselves to a strictly binary design system—either translating visual experiences directly into pictorial form or slavishly copying what came before. The beautiful sculptures and paintings reproduced in this book make plain that thirteenth-century artists, with no less sophistication than their classical forebears, were perfectly capable of fusing natural observation with artistic finesse, reshaping their environment to display more clearly the order and unity of design behind the manifold superficial forms—an order and unity that, as medieval theologians contended, God himself had placed there for savvy observers to find. Surely the delight in revealing this divine harmony while also celebrating the visible world underlay both the production and reception of these works. Alongside the functional, technical, and social dimensions of observation in medieval image making that Givens so lucidly expounds, the religious aspect that pervaded contemporary approaches to nature and art must not be overlooked.

JACQUELINE E. JUNG, *University of California, Berkeley*.

FULLER, ROBERT. *Wonder: From Emotion to Spirituality*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. x+188 pp. \$24.94 (cloth).

In this exploration of wonder as experience and as motivator for religiosity, Robert Fuller sets out a descriptive and prescriptive agenda. Using recent work in psychology and neurobiology, he wishes to introduce scholars of religious studies to research into the functions of emotions, as well as to argue that wonder is a key emotional experience in lives that are characterized by joy and deep ethical engagement in the world. Wonder, argues Fuller, opens up human beings to a depth of being and to ideas of ultimacy that enrich those who experience it; it can enhance both cognitive and moral development by inviting human beings to entertain questions about the nature and causality of existence. Propelled by a desire to understand what people are describing when they describe themselves as "spiritual" if not necessarily "religious," he produces a cohesive, carefully written, and valuable exposition of the elemental importance of wonder as a component of spirituality and of its ultimately adaptive function in human life.

Fuller begins by lending precision to his terms by surveying academic explorations of the emotions. Although wonder is not usually listed as one of the "primary" (genetically based) emotions in modern Western scientific investigation, Fuller points out that wonder's classification reveals as much about the philosophical assumptions of the behaviorist and constructivist schools of psychology as it does about wonder itself. These schools of research tend to ask

what the evolutionary function of an emotion is; they thus focus on emotions' short-term adaptive function as motivators of utilitarian actions that enable survival. Fuller cites research that more helpfully locates wonder in a family of emotions like surprise, joy, and interest, which have a genetic basis but are also connected with cultural and personal conditioning. Furthermore, such "moral emotions," as they are labeled by one researcher (31), are associated with the good of the social group to which the individual belongs. Like the primary emotions, they too are selected by evolution (i.e., they persist in the human organism) because they have long-term adaptive significance. They are the primary motivational sources of "long-term constructive or creative endeavors" (37) that shape both engagement in a wider community and speculation about the causality and meaning of human life. Religion's task is to ritualize wonder, creating the situations and forms that help people act on its invitation to a world beyond utilitarian calculation and simple survival.

Fuller argues persuasively that openness to wonder plays a part in cognitive and moral development by creating a disruption in the way we cognitively sort our experience. This rupture makes the space for new categories of thought, redrawing the boundaries of our concern from the personal to the communal and the short-term to the ultimate. Wonder is central to the kind of transformation that is genuinely religious. By disrupting the stable cognitive categories that allow us to take much of the world and other people for granted, experiences of wonder spur us to press for the meaning of profane existence by referring to a world beyond the everyday.

Fuller punctuates his argument about wonder's long-term adaptive utility with descriptions of three lives propelled by wonder. John Muir, William James, and Rachel Carson exemplify an attitude toward life—questing, joyous, and humble—that takes as its central human work the task of being engaged with a wider community for the good of the whole. Fuller uses these three autobiographies to support his assertion that, far from being a merely personal experience of the numinous, the experience of wonder is "functional" in the way that a scientist could recognize when it inspires knowledge and care for the world, a world in which we are no longer automatically at the center.

Throughout his book, Fuller expertly weaves together research in neurobiology, anthropology, and sociology to illustrate his claims about the workings of wonder as an emotional experience, so that when he finally places his own book within the larger project to understand "spirituality in the flesh," he has earned the reader's esteem by the care with which he establishes his categories. His questions about whether discrete emotions (e.g., fear or anger) mobilize specific kinds of adaptive strategies and about how religious traditions might "regulate and redirect" (146) the expressions of such emotions in ways that militate against sectarian violence are important in the current situation in the Middle East and in research into fundamentalist movements.

MARY CLAIRE DOYLE, *Minneapolis, Minnesota.*

CLAYTON, PHILIP. *Mind and Emergence: From Quantum to Consciousness*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. xii+236 pp. \$65.08 (cloth); \$27.95 (paper).

Emergence theory—deriving most immediately from contemporary science, especially the life sciences and neuroscience, but also more distantly from its inchoate stages in philosophy and theology as far back as Aristotle and Plotinus

to its modern manifestations in G. W. F. Hegel and Alfred North Whitehead—has become central to many contemporary philosophical and theological debates. The basis intuition is that, in many instances, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and yet is dependent on them for its existence and constrained by them in its character. A person, for example, is more than the atomic constituents of the body and yet could not exist without them. Modern neuroscience continues to explain how closely linked the character of our mental experience is to various features of the brain. A wedding, to take another example, would be inadequately understood were it described only as the interaction of particles tracing specific movements in space. In each of these cases, a meaningful whole has emerged from its constituent parts in such a way that it comes to possess its own ontological status distinct from that of the parts.

The notion of emergence, according to Philip Clayton in *Mind and Emergence*, may provide the conceptual catalyst to propel the theology-science debate beyond its seemingly intractable impasse. That is, this abstract concept of emergence promises a *tertium quid* between reductionism and dualism by maintaining (contra reductionism) the irreducibility of phenomena such as life, mind, and even spirit to the physical substrate and its causal laws while at the same time refusing (contra dualism) the conversation-ending approach of positing a distinct and nonnatural form of reality devoid of connection with the physical realm.

One of the daunting tasks of a book like this is to cull the disparate scientific (and humanistic) fields in order to assemble the various meanings of the concept of emergence. In fact, Clayton's concise overviews of its many forms demonstrate that its usage is so vast that one can at best create family-resemblance theories of emergence. Those seeking a single "covering law" will search in vain. Emergence in conductivity will not be identical to or even describable in precisely the same way as emergence in cellularity or foraging behaviors, much less in persons or weddings (93). However, Clayton manages to classify the spectrum of families in a clear way. If the spectrum is bounded on one end by reductionist physicalism and by dualism on the other, Clayton identifies three forms of emergence as intervening positions. Near physicalism, one finds what Clayton terms *façon de parler* emergence, which is actually physicalism in disguise; for example, discussion of cells, minds, or persons is simply shorthand for complicated aggregates of more basic physical entities and forces and should not be taken as an endorsement of their ontological status as emergent wholes. In Kantian language, emergence is a regulative ideal rather than constitutive of reality. Next one finds weak emergence, which primarily amounts to either an epistemological point or a negligible ontological one. In the epistemological sense, weak emergence refers to the claim that some phenomena can never be fully explained within the terms of the constituent parts and the efficient causal nexus that binds them together. In the ontological sense (which primarily occupies Clayton), weak emergence refers to real constraint of the whole on the structure and behavior of the parts, as when the motion of a wheel (the whole) constrains the motion of its constituent molecules (the parts). For Clayton, such constraints are weak insofar as they do not exert actual causal force but merely limit the causal potential of the parts. Finally, furthest along the spectrum toward dualism Clayton highlights and endorses strong emergence. The distinguishing factor is the robust causal power of the whole to exert influence on the parts rather than merely constrain them. Clay-

ton is especially indebted to Terrence Deacon (and, to a lesser extent, Stuart Kauffman) for this model of emergence and the defense of it. He claims to expand Deacon's account by suggesting a "broader iterating structure" in which emergent levels of being provide the conditions for further emergence beyond them (48). However, Deacon's detailed account of coevolution and the Baldwin effect (as well as Kauffman's account of self-organization) largely fulfill Clayton's aspiration already and do so with more thorough exposition.

After dealing with emergence in the life sciences, Clayton addresses the morass of material in philosophy of mind, guided principally by analytic philosopher David Chalmers's suspicion of neuroscience as a means to manage the "hard problem" of consciousness. For Clayton, the conscious mind with its causal power is a clear case of strong emergence, and yet he wishes to account for the mind's interaction with the physical world in a credible way within the field of neuroscience. Without descending too far into the weeds of this philosophical marsh, let me simply note that Clayton occasionally equivocates on the sense of "strong emergence." At one point, he equates it with Robert Van Gulick's "radical kind of emergence" according to which some features of the whole are not necessitated by the facts about the parts (132), though it seems *prima facie* distinct from (if not incompatible with) mental causation. At other points, he refers to mind as a "type of property that emerges from the brain" (128) in order to avoid Cartesian substance dualism, but he does not adequately explain how such a property can have causal power or how these causes relate to other ordinary physical causes. Clayton's ontology is monist, but the one "stuff" has many properties that arise through the evolutionary (and co-evolutionary, he should say) processes of natural history (158). In fact, emergence theory is essentially the diachronic version of supervenience theory, which is a synchronic account of the many layers of complexity in the world. In any case, philosophers of mind will note (as Clayton acknowledges) that many of the problems relating to causal interaction for the substance dualist reappear within the context of emergent layers of reality and their interrelations.

Clayton concludes with some speculation about further levels of emergence, including theological ruminations on transcendent mind. Although he discusses Hegel's historical contribution to the field, he does not consider work such as Vincent Descombes's retrieval of Hegel's objective *Geist* in order to account for these emergent phenomena. He does include an interesting section on emergence as contingent, necessary, or theistically teleological. Again, this discussion would be enhanced by further consideration of the idealist claim that mind (be it finite or transcendent) must be spontaneous and a self-determined product of itself. On the whole, the book provides a good overview of emergence theory and will be of interest for those studying philosophy of mind as well as the theology-science dialogue.

WILLIAM KIBLINGER, *Winthrop University*.

BULKELEY, KELLY. *The Wondering Brain: Thinking about Religion with and beyond Cognitive Neuroscience*. New York: Routledge, 2005. xii+229 pp. \$85.00 (cloth); \$22.95 (paper).

Kelly Bulkeley notes that the most famous early authors in psychology of religion used the best science of their day to advance their understanding of

religion. He justly claims that he is engaging in a similar effort at the beginning of the twenty-first century, as he expands the conversation of religion and cognitive science.

Bulkeley focuses on the topic of "wonder," which he defines as "*the feeling excited by an encounter with something novel and unexpected, something that strikes a person as intensely real, true, and/or beautiful*" (3). He amplifies the definition to entail that a person must "experience a sudden *decentering* of the self," undergo an altered sense of identity, and acquire "new knowledge and understanding that ultimately *recenter* the self" (4). He focuses on four "spheres" in which wonder notably transpires: "visionary dreaming, sexual desire, aesthetic experience, and contemplative practice" (3). Each is the topic of a chapter discussing creatively and provocatively a specific instance: a particular individual's dreams, sexual desire in the film *American Beauty*, the band Nirvana's leader Kurt Cobain, and the prophecies of Muhammad. Not only does this bold book use cognitive neuroscience to interpret these evocations of wonder, but it also urges and demonstrates that cognitive neuroscience can and should be enriched and chastened by the view of scholars of religious studies.

The problem of entering on a topic about which the reader may know little is relieved immediately by Bulkeley's deft outline of the topics and the structure of the writing. Chapter 1 begins with a story of a young man trying to decide what to do with his life. Intrigued by the encounter with this seeker, one forges into a brief introduction of brain anatomy and physiology. Then follows a discussion of the role of visionary dreams in religion and the concepts made available by cognitive neuroscience for understanding, appreciating, and reevaluating dreams. One then returns to the young man with some mind-bending questions about how to reflect on him and his influence on Euro-American thought. A similar structure appears in each of the chapters in turn: a specific instance, neuroscience further explained and used as interpretive tool, exploration of the relationship of this aspect of neuroscience to the study of religion, and return to the specific instance. The next three chapters also feature critical and appreciative interludes on Freud, Jung, and James, respectively.

Could the conversation between religion and neuroscience advanced by *The Wondering Brain* be usefully filled out by critiquing some points that Bulkeley challenges perhaps too gently? For instance, chapters 2 and 3 use evolutionary psychology as the branch of cognitive neuroscience to discuss. This field draws on controversial work in sociobiology, and Bulkeley demonstrates that a knee-jerk scrapping of evolutionary psychology would be unwise. Nonetheless, some of the standard weaknesses of evolutionary psychology appear. In chapter 3, a discussion of brain structure and function in relation to music highlights music's adaptive advantages. Music's value for social cohesion and the functions of music in religion add up to adaptiveness in the life of both a community and its members. Music is shown, moreover, to lead to the modulation and expansion of its members' neural activities. So far so fascinating. Language of intentionality, however, turns up in regard to processes, like natural selection, that theoretically are void of intentionality. In addition, adaptation comes across as the key to every aspect of the human condition. How would our thinking be helped by a concept of exaptation, the understanding that evolution has produced more capacities than are strictly necessary for survival and that these surplus possibilities can give rise to aspects of individual and social life that need not promote survival? For example, with our excess brain power

we can imagine gods, allegiance to whom leads to our death. As a final example of the need for further critical thought, we have the repeated citation of sources that consider male dominance the natural result of biology. This view makes the most sense if one insists that culture derives from biology and shrugs off the interaction of the two. Remembering the interactions, for instance, one sees that teachings by a male-dominated clergy against artificial contraception can greatly affect the biological well-being of women with large families in poverty. Is it biology or culture that perpetuates the dominance of men over women, at least some of whom are sick and worn out with child-bearing and rearing?

The Wondering Brain should achieve its aim of spurring conversation. It teaches enough for people to enter discussion, includes very helpful illustrations of the brain and perceptual processes, and takes on tough questions about wonders such as war that are neither pleasant nor beautiful. Bulkeley pushes thought, organization of scholarly argument, sympathy with the past, and demands on present research. In the long run, he succeeds in encouraging us to recenter our own professional lives in the light of wonder as the mark of the philosopher, who is treasured in this book as any serious lover of wisdom.

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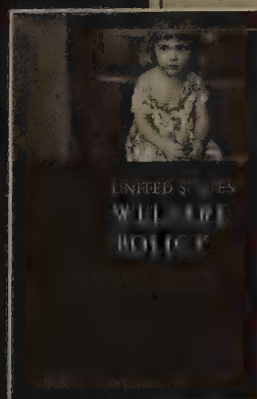
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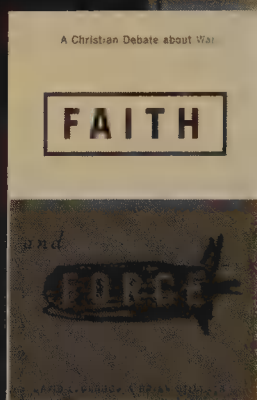
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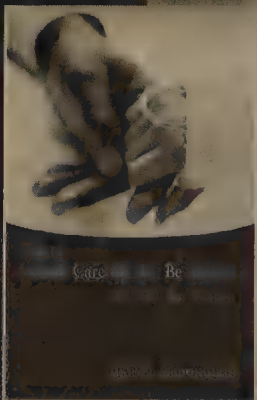
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Nature, Art, and Thought: Dio Chrysostom and the *Theologia Tripertita**

Hans-Josef Klauck / University of Chicago

I. A FIRST APPROACH: PLUTARCH'S *DIALOGUE ON LOVE*

Claiming a leading position for Eros, "Love," as a benevolent deity in the Greek pantheon, is a major goal of Plutarch's *Dialogue on Love*.¹ Plutarch of Chaironeia, prolific writer, middle Platonic philosopher, and priest of Apollo at the oracular shrine at Delphi, composed this treatise, which is usually considered one of his most mature works, late in his life perhaps as late as 120 CE (he lived from approximately 45 to 125 CE).² The setting and structure of the work are rather sophisticated, as is to be expected. Plutarch's grown-up son Autobulus relates

* This article was initially presented on Thursday, October 5, 2006, as the inaugural lecture on the occasion of my appointment to the position of the Naomi Shenstone Donnelley Professor of New Testament and Early Christian Literature at the University of Chicago. All translations are my own, if not noted otherwise. I owe special thanks to my research assistant, Trevor W. Thompson, for his careful editing of the English manuscript.

¹ In Latin the title is *Amatorius*, in Greek Ἐρωτικός. For the text, with German translation, commentary, and further bibliography, see Herwig Görgemanns, Barbara Feichtinger, Fritz Graf, Werner Jeanrond, and Jan Opsomer, *Plutarch: Dialog über die Liebe/Amatorius*, Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris ad Ethicam Religionemque pertinentia 10 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); an innovative reading of the treatise is provided by Frederick E. Brenk, "All for Love: The Rhetoric of Exaggeration in Plutarch's *Erotikos*," in Luc Van der Stockt, *Rhetorical Theory and Praxis in Plutarch*, Collection d'Études Classiques (Louvain: Éditions Peeters, 2000), 45–60; see also Herwig Görgemanns, "Eros als Gott in Plutarchs 'Amatorius,'" in *Gott und die Götter bei Plutarch: Götterbilder—Gottesbilder—Weltbilder*, ed. Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 54 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 169–95.

² Section 771C seems to refer to the fall of the Flavian house with the death of Domitian in 96 CE; sec. 771B (at the end) could allude to a war in Egypt that took place in 116–17 CE; see the note in W. C. Hembold, "The Dialogue on Love," in *Plutarch's Moralia in Sixteen Volumes*, vol. 9, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 438. These are anachronisms when compared to the "real time" of the dialogue somewhere between 60 and 80 CE, but this "date" is of course completely fictitious; see the note of Donald A. Russell, "Eroticus," in his *Plutarch: Selected Essays and Dialogues*, World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 381. On a late date for the treatise, see also Robert Flacelière, "Dialogue sur l'amour," in *Plutarque: Œuvres morales*, ed. Robert Flacelière, vol. 10, Collection des Universités de France (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1980), 7–11.

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a story that his father often told to his friends and family. Young Plutarch, only recently married, is the main speaker within the dialogue. He visits the Boetian city of Thespieae, where his newlywed wife wants to redeem a vow that she had made to Eros. Conveniently, there is a large statue of Eros found in a sanctuary at Thespieae, and the city is celebrating a festival in honor of Eros that takes place every four years.

This biographical frame that contains allusions to an obviously happy marriage, namely Plutarch's own, is skillfully interwoven with a real-life story. Ismenodora, a rich, beautiful, and still rather young widow, has fallen in love with a handsome young man named Bacchon, who is her junior by perhaps ten years. The male suitors of the lad are nearly driven crazy by this development and try to prevent the union by all means. Ismenodora senses the danger and opts for a radical solution. She has the young man kidnapped—Plutarch writes with a twinkle in his eyes: “her friends prettily snatched up the pretty one and bundled him away” (καλὸν καλῶς . . . συναρπάσαντες; 754F)—and prepares for a clandestine marriage. This leads to heated disputes in the city and in the circle of Plutarch's philosophical friends, some of whom had invested personal interests in young Bacchon. The end of this story is a happy one. The last thing we hear about Ismenodora and Bacchon is that they are married; this event is greeted by the city with universal acclaim.

In the long dialogical parts of the treatise, many arguments are exchanged on the relative advantages and disadvantages of same-sex relationships and conventional marriage, Plutarch clearly being in favor of the latter. The statement that is most important for us comes toward the end (763C). Here Plutarch in the double role of inner-textual speaker and, I would say, real author explains that most of our concepts derive their internal logic and persuasion (πίστις) from three sources, that is, from myth (*mythos*), law (*nomos*), and reason (*logos*). This is then transferred to our thinking about the gods, which is supplied by, respectively, poets, legislators, and philosophers. Though they are often at variance among themselves on many points, all of them agree on the important role of Eros as king, ruler, and harmonizer among the gods (763D). Eminent representatives are adduced as proof in each case—Hesiod for the poets, Plato for the philosophers, and Solon for the legislators.

This is the bare outline, not more, of the so-called *theologia tripertita*. The term itself seems to be modern. We could perhaps best translate it with “three genres of teaching and reflecting about the gods,” in

poetry, legislation, and philosophy.³ Plutarch, a relatively minor voice within the *theologia tripartita* tradition, might seem like a strange place to begin in exploring the adaptation of the *theologia tripartita* model by Dio Chrysostom. There are, however, several reasons in favor of this approach. First, Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom are contemporaries, and both are Greek. Our main source for the *theologia tripartita* is in Latin, as we will see in the next paragraph. Plutarch is most probably not dependent on the Latin material and thus helps to demonstrate the Greek origin of this concept.⁴ Second, Plutarch is a Middle Platonic thinker. Earlier scholars tended to claim the origin of the *theologia tripartita* for Stoicism.⁵ The usual suspects are brought forward, that is, Panaetius or Poseidonius, the two leading Stoic philosophers of Hellenistic times.⁶ In truth, there is nothing specifically Stoic about this doctrine. Although the various components were not yet integrated, the individual parts are already found in the theological reflections of Plato and Aristotle, before Stoicism came into existence.⁷ Third, Plutarch provides a fine demonstration of a move that is followed by most authors who make use of the tripartite theology: they shape the model

³ On this topic, see esp. Jean Pépin, *Mythe et allégorie: Les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1976), 13–32, 276–392; and Godo Lieberg, “Die ‘theologia tripartita’ in Forschung und Bezeugung,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, ser. 1, vol. 4 (1973): 63–115, and “Die theologia tripartita als Formprinzip antiken Denkens,” *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 125 (1982): 25–53 (in English as “The *Theologia Tripartita* as an Intellectual Model in Antiquity,” in *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, Monograph Series no. 4, *Essays in Memory of Karl Kerényi*, ed. Edgar C. Polomé [Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of Man, 1984], 91–115).

⁴ As does somewhat earlier Strabo, who completed his voluminous *Geographica* probably in 7 BCE. He has an excursus on our topic in 1.2.8: cities and states made use of myths long before the poets did. Mythic tales are for children but also for the uneducated masses. Religious fear (δεισιδαιμονία) is needed to keep them in check (cf. Polybius 6.56.6–12). Philosophy is only for the few. Of interest for us is that Strabo mentions paintings and statues and also alludes to the theater.

⁵ The Stoic notions in the *Amatorius* are overemphasized by Pépin, *Mythe et allégorie*, 290–91. From about the same time as Plutarch comes the handbook of Aetius, *De placitis philosophorum*, which is partly transmitted in the corpus of Plutarch’s writings. Aetius gives a short summary of the *theologia tripartita* in 1.6; it is taken as Stoic in *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (SVF) II, 1009 (300, lines 8–12), but this may be a later gloss.

⁶ By way of an example, I quote Hermann Binder, *Dio Chrysostomus und Posidonius: Quellenuntersuchungen zur Theologie des Dio von Prusa*, Diss. phil., Tübingen (Borna-Leipzig: Noske, 1905), 13–46; ample additional references are found in Lieberg, “Die ‘theologia tripartita’ in Forschung und Bezeugung,” esp. 65–80.

⁷ On Plato and Aristotle, see the much ignored contribution by Günter Pasorek, “Eine historische Notiz zur Scheidung von ‘theologia civilis’ und ‘naturalis,’” in *Symmicta Philologica Salisburgensia: Georgio Pfligersdorffer Sexagenario Oblata*, ed. Joachim Dalfen et al. (Rome: Edizioni dell’Ateneo, 1980), 87–103, 102, in which he correctly notes: “Mythos, Nomos und (natur-)philosophische Gotteserkenntnis treten hier [i.e., in Plato and Aristotle] zu jenem Dreieck zusammen, wie es später wiederholt Grundriß der Beschäftigung mit dem Religiösen wurde.”

according to the individual context, with their own rhetorical aims constantly in mind. Remember that, starting with the biographical frame, nearly everything in Plutarch's treatise is about marriage and love. Throughout, philosophical reflection and advice,⁸ mythic tales (both traditional⁹ and poetic¹⁰) and public ritual,¹¹ and state legislation¹² are exploited to this end. Here the theology in three parts comes in as a very convenient summary.

There are some other points that need our consideration and should equally be kept in mind. One of the speakers claims that legislation on marriage is for the masses only and not for the happy few (750C). For Plutarch, on the contrary, the traditional "faith of our fathers" is the firm and common basis of true piety (756B). It is risky to excessively insist on rational evidence for each and every god and rite (756D). To equate gods and passions (e.g., Aphrodite with desire, Hermes with eloquence, and Athena with wisdom) would lead to an "abyss of atheism" (757B-C). The subtext here is allegorical exegesis of mythical tales. But religion has its dark sides too. It might lead to superstition (756C) and magical practices (alluded to in 752C).¹³ The epistemological status of myth generally is somewhat precarious. Plutarch introduces a string of mythical examples by stating, "If there is ever any use for proof from myths too" (761E). It is advisable neither fully to believe nor altogether to disbelieve them; they might just touch at the truth.¹⁴ But we are on much firmer ground when we try to reach truth through Plato's philosophy (762A). Finally, it is noteworthy that the triadic pattern can be overlaid by binary oppositions, when, for example, poets

⁸ See 749C: passing their time with philosophical discussions; 751E: the calm sea of marriage and philosophy; see also the quotation drawn from Empedocles (756D-E), Parmenides (756E-F), Chrysippus (757B), and esp. Plato on enthusiasm (758D-E). Socrates is mentioned in 762D. The Epicureans get their fair share of criticism, as usual (765C, 766E, 767C, 769F). In 759D, we find a Cynic slogan.

⁹ See the series of gods mentioned in 757D and 758A-B, or the description of Ares in 757A-C; see also the mention of tales about Alcestis, Orpheus, and Eurydice in 761E-F.

¹⁰ See 750C; 751B: a proscription by Solon; 754D; 755D: law and order; 769A: Solon on marriage; 770A.

¹¹ See the shrine of the Muses and the festival in honor of Eros in 748F. Orgiastic oriental cults are seen with some reservation; see 756C, 758E-F, 758B. Language of the mystery cults is used prominently in 761F-762A and also in 765A and 766B.

¹² Hesiod is quoted in, e.g., 753A and 756F; Euripides in 756B-C; Sophocles in 757A and 761F; Homer in 759A; a not very well known poet Dionysius (of Corinth?) in 761B; and Sappho in 762F-763A; see also the passage on poetic imagination in 759C and on the superiority of poetry compared with prose in 769C.

¹³ Δεισιδαιμονία; see Plutarch's early treatise *De superstitione* (*Moralia* 164E-171E).

¹⁴ Compare the comment on Egyptian mythology that contains faint particles of truth scattered around, in 762A; tracking them down, which needs, still according to 762A, a clever pursuer, is of course a task that Plutarch has set himself in *De Iside et Osiride* (*Moralia* 351C-384B).

and legislators on the one side close ranks against philosophers on the other side (763D). Here we may see the much older antithesis of *nomos* (law) and *physis* (nature) or of *thesis* (convention) and *physis* still at work, which has been seen by some as the place of origin of the tripartite theology.¹⁵

II. MAJOR SOURCES: AUGUSTINE AND VARRO

To fill out this basic picture we must turn to a more extended testimony. Remarkably, the main witness for the tripartite theology is Augustine in his monumental *The City of God*.¹⁶ He in turn relies on Marcus Terentius Varro (116–27 BCE), arguably the most learned Roman of his time, who, says Augustine with grudging admiration, “read so much that we are surprised that he found some spare time to write; he wrote so much that scarcely anybody, I believe, could read it all” (*Civ.* 6.2). Varro’s lost encyclopedia, *Antiquitates rerum (humanorum et) divinarum*, a title that we might loosely translate as “Ancient (Roman) Notions of Things Divine Reported and Explained,” can be partly reconstructed from Augustine’s extensive quotes.¹⁷

Already following Varro, Augustine in book 4 first refers to Quintus Mucius Scaevola, *pontifex maximus* since 89 BCE, who spoke of three kinds of gods handed down to us by the poets, the philosophers, and the statesmen (*Civ.* 4.27).¹⁸ Scaevola does not like the poetic variety,

¹⁵ See, e.g., Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*, Gifford Lectures 1936 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1947), 2–3. That *nomos* connotes legislation is clear, but poets also were seen as servants of this law, transmitting it to the people and “customizing” it for them; physics and metaphysics were regarded as parts of philosophy.

¹⁶ The Latin text used here is that of Bernard Dombart and Alfons Kalb, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Episcopi De Civitate Dei, libri I–X*, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 47 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955; hereafter cited in the text as *Civ.*). On our special topic see Albrecht Dihle, “Die Theologia tripartita bei Augustin,” in *Geschichte—Tradition—Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, vol. 2, *Griechische und Römische Religion*, ed. Hubert Cancik (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 183–202.

¹⁷ See the collection of fragments by Burkart Cardauns, *M. Terentius Varro: Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum*, vol. 1, *Die Fragmente*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz, Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Klasse 1 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1976). On the *theologia tripartita* in Varro, see Pierre Boyancé, “Sur la théologie de Varron,” *Revue des études anciennes* 57 (1955): 57–84; Jean Pépin, “La ‘théologie tripartite’ de Varron: Essai de reconstitution et recherche des sources,” in *Mémorial Gustave Bardy, Revue des études augustiniennes* 2 (1956): 265–94; Heinrich Dörrie, “Zu Varros Konzeption der theologia tripartita in den *Antiquitates rerum divinarum*,” in *Beiträge zur altitalischen Geistesgeschichte: Festschrift Gerhard Radke*, ed. Ruth Altheim-Stiehl and Manfred Rosenbach, *Fontes et Commentationes* 2 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1986), 76–81; Yves Lehmann, *Varron théologien et philosophe romain*, Collection Latomus 237 (Brussels: Latomus, 1997), 193–225.

¹⁸ According to Burkart Cardauns (*Marcus Terentius Varro: Einführung in sein Werk*, Heidelberger Studienhefte zur Altertumswissenschaft [Heidelberg: Winter, 2001], 57, 73–4), Augustine takes this reference to Scaevola from Varro’s *Logistoricus Curio de culto deorum*, not

since the poets tell too many scandalous tales of the gods, and he is rather skeptical about the philosophical type, because it might harm the simple folks.¹⁹ He is, however, fully in favor of the civic cults, which we would expect from a high state official. Yet, *simulacra*, that is, images of the gods, seem to have been a problem for him even within the state cult (see also *Civ.* 4.30). This notion is even more explicit in Varro himself, who maintains that for the first 170 years the Romans did not use images in worship (*Civ.* 4.31; cf. 7.5); their cult was aniconic. For Dio Chrysostom this will become a problem of highest importance. Augustine for his part focuses almost to the point of obsession on the stage, the amphitheater, and the circus, where the mythical tales are reproduced for the audience.²⁰ In a rhetorical apostrophe, he addresses his source authority: "O Scaevola, *pontifex maximus*, if you can, do away with the plays" (4.27).²¹

Augustine reserves books 6 and 7 for his dispute with Varro (see also *Civ.* 3.4). His own perspective is clear from the beginning. If the most learned (*doctissimus*) Varro had intended to prove that all these divine things belong not to religion but to the ridiculous, he could not have done better than he actually did (*Civ.* 6.2). This, unfortunately, makes it difficult to clearly distinguish between Augustine's perspective and Varro's own.

In book 6, we find two summaries of the *theologia tripertita* no longer understood as "kinds of gods" as in Scaevola but more as approaches to the teaching about gods, to their reception by different audiences, and even as ways of introducing them to humanity. The summary in 6.5 speaks of three kinds of theology, one called *mythicon*, one *physicon*, and the third one not, as we might expect, *politicon*, but *civile* (Tertullian has *gentile*). The second instance in 6.12 first uses Greek forms throughout: *mythicen physicen politicen*; but Latin translations are supplied too, namely, *fabulosa naturalis civilis*. Let us take a closer look at each of the three types in turn.

The mythical or fabulous theology belongs to the poets and is chiefly suited to the theater (6.5). This idea was not new. We learn from Herodotus (2.53) that Hesiod and Homer "taught the Greeks the genealogies of the gods, gave them their names, distributed honors and offices among them, and described their outward appearance." The

from his *Antiquitates*, the latter being the more common opinion; cf. Harald Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, *Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia* 20 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967), 619–20.

¹⁹ Among other things by a euhemeristic explanation of the origin of gods: they were men of old, only later deified (*Civ.* 4.27; cf. 6.7, 7.18).

²⁰ See *Civ.* 4.31: *ludos scaenicos* in Varro.

²¹ He does this also several times with Varro; see *Civ.* 6.6; 7.5, 22.

tales of the poets are enacted by players on stage.²² If we look for a place for visual representations of the gods, primarily in statuary, it would certainly be found here, with mythical theology.²³

Physical or natural theology is done by philosophers and corresponds to the universe. This comes as no surprise either. Physics and metaphysics were carried on by philosophers since at least the days of the pre-Socratics. Philosophy is the traditional setting for reflection on the origin and nature of the divine as well as critical reflection on these topics. On anthropomorphic representation of the deity, for example, the pre-Socratic philosopher Xenophanes had already made the biting comment that oxen, horses, and lions, if they had hands and the ability to do it, would produce statues of gods conforming to their own image.²⁴

Political or civil theology is used by the people through the mediation of statesmen and priests; it functions within city and state. Especially in Rome, statesmen and priests were more or less the same persons. Scaevola, whom we have already mentioned, had been quaestor, tribune, aedilis, praetor, consul, and governor of Asia Minor before he became *pontifex maximus*. New is the insight that civil theology deals not only with religious law but also with public cult and ritual, holidays and festivals, temple service and personnel, augury and divination, and so on; all these phenomena are given to the realm of civil theology.²⁵ Like the law that governs it, these issues belong to the daily life of the people in the city. That is again especially true for Roman religion, with its strong focus on official orthopraxy.²⁶

Varro, to whom we have listened so far, had done his own share of civic and military duties, as tribune, quaestor, praetor, and commander of a fleet and a legion. His main interest was in political theology. In what he saw as a time of decay, he wanted to save traditional Roman piety and its practices, for the good of the city and the state. There is more, however, to his thought (at this point we are most probably still

²² *Civ.* 6.7: *theologia fabulosa theatrica scaenica*; cf. Dörrie, "Zu Varros Konzeption," 79: "denn sie [i.e., mythical theology] spricht vorzugsweise aus der Tragödie. Somit wirkt sie nicht nur auf ein Lesepublikum, sondern sie kommt, eindringlicher als durch bloße Lektüre, dann zum Tragen, wenn man tragische Aufführungen miterlebt."

²³ *Civ.* 6.7: "Quid enim aliud ostendunt illa simulacra formae aetates sexus habitus deorum?"

²⁴ *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, vols. 1–3, ed. H. Diels and W. Kranz, 6th ed. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1951–52), B 15, from Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 5.109.3; see also his criticism of Homer and Hesiod on the gods in Diels and Kranz, *Die Fragmente*, 21 B 11–12, from Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicos* 9.193; 1.289; see the mention of Xenophanes by Varro in *Civ.* 7.17.

²⁵ *Civ.* 6.5: "In quo est, quos deos publice colere, quae sacra et sacrificia quemque par sit."

²⁶ "Official orthopraxy" is the term used in Charles King, "The Organization of Roman Religious Beliefs," *Classical Antiquity* 22 (2003): 275–312, 297.

following Varro and not yet Augustine). Varro was no special friend of mythical theology.²⁷ His personal preference clearly lay with a philosophical approach to religion, informed by the Academy, which had undergone a fair amount of Stoic influence by his time. "God" for Varro really means the reasonable soul that governs the universe (see *Civ.* 4.31, 7.5). But this truth is only for the few, not for the many (6.5: it should be kept "within the walls of a school" and is not apt "for the marketplace"; cf. 4.31).

There exists only one way that leads from the mythical tales and the civic cults to a philosophically informed view of religion, and this is allegorical exegesis.²⁸ By applying it, the myths and the rites are reduced to natural phenomena. Jupiter symbolizes light, fiery air; Juno, dark, heavy air (see *Civ.* 4.10); Tellus, earth; Neptune, water; and so on. Varro seems to have made ample use of this basically Stoic strategy. Book VII of *The City of God* is full of examples in which the Roman gods are so explained. Notably, the technical term for this kind of exegesis, "physiological," is here employed.²⁹ In the end, the triad is transformed into a dual structure, with poetic and civic theology, tailored for the many, on the one hand, and philosophical theology, addressing the few, on the other. Allegory serves as a kind of bridge leading from one side to the other. In this respect, Varro might well be a prime example of an educated person dealing in a sincere way with some rather troubling questions who found a personally satisfying solution.

What Augustine does with this construct, sometimes by fair, sometimes by unfair means, is pretty predictable. He accuses Varro of cheating the people (*Civ.* 4.27), of not being completely candid (4.31),³⁰ and of giving in to undue pressure of custom and law (6.2). Already in Augustine, Varro becomes an enlightened philosopher before his time, with a slightly cynical attitude toward traditional religion, which he nevertheless defends in the interest of law and order as the only means of keeping the masses at bay.³¹ But Augustine also has a keen eye for the fact that the three theologies are finally conflated into one by Varro, that is, into a philosophically grounded view of the divine in nature

²⁷ See *Civ.* 6.5: mythical theology, "quam libere a se putavit esse culpandam."

²⁸ This point is forcefully made by Pépin, *Mythe et allégorie*, 323–65; on the following, see also the precise summary of Varro's theology in Cardauns, *M. Terentius Varro*, 242–44.

²⁹ *Civ.* 7.5: *interpretationes physicas* or, somewhat later in the same chapter, *physiologicas*; *Civ.* 7.27: *physiologias*. It is interesting that Basil Studer (*Schola christiana: Die Theologie zwischen Nizäa [325] und Chalzedon [451]* [Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1998]), who uses the *theologia tripartita* as a pattern for structuring his Christian material, identifies *theologia naturalis* (33) and *theologia allegorica* (316).

³⁰ In *Civ.* 6.10, Augustine contrasts this with the frankness of Seneca, as he perceives it.

³¹ See the corresponding observation of Cotta in Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* (hereafter *Nat. Deor.*) 1.77.

that is expressed more or less adequately by the different types of theology (see *Civ.* 8.5).³² We cannot go any deeper into this fascinating topic, but the broader picture that we have painted so far will help us to locate more precisely Dio Chrysostom's contribution to the topic.

III. A SPECIAL CONFIGURATION: DIO CHRYSOSTOM'S *OLYMPIC ORATION*

A. *Setting the Scene*

Dio's "*Olympian Oration* deserves to be better known than it is";³³ this judgment of 1962 still holds true. Dio of Prusa, also called "Chrysostom," that is, gold-mouthed, because of his rhetorical abilities, was considered the best orator of the late first and early second century CE. He also was a philosopher in his own right, Stoic by orientation, with occasional sympathies for a Cynic style of life, which were further provoked by his experience of being exiled under Domitian.³⁴ In 105 CE, less likely in 97 CE or 101 CE, he delivered a speech at Olympia during the Olympic Games that in the manuscripts has the title *Olympic Oration* (Ὀλυμπικός; hereafter *Or.* 12);³⁵ the subtitle reads "Or on the first

³² Glenn W. Most ("Philosophy and Religion," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*, ed. David Sedley [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], 300–322, 308) attributes a further task to Varro's *theologia tripertita*, namely, to immunize the institutions of the city "against any corrosive impact which might otherwise have derived from philosophical speculation about the true nature of divinity."

³³ Bruce F. Harris, "The Olympian Oration of Dio Chrysostom," *Journal of Religious History* 2 (1962): 85–97, 85; see also the praise of this speech in the groundbreaking study of Hans von Arnim, *Leben und Werke des Dio von Prusa, mit einer Einleitung: Sophistik, Rhetorik, Philosophie in ihrem Kampf um die Jugendbildung* (1898; repr., Berlin: Weidmann, 2004), 477: "Insofern gehört die Olympica . . . zu den wichtigsten Denkmälern der antiken Religionsgeschichte."

³⁴ Dio's most extensive autobiographical comments on his exile are found in his *Or.* 13; on this important text, see also the illuminating studies by John Moles, "The Thirteenth Oration of Dio Chrysostom: Complexity and Simplicity, Rhetoric and Moralism, Literature and Life," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 125 (2005): 112–38; and Christiane Krause, *Strategie der Selbstinszenierung: Das rhetorische Ich in den Reden Dions von Prusa*, Serta Graeca 16 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2003), 37–59.

³⁵ For the Greek text, see Hans von Arnim, *Dionis Prusaensis quem vocant Chrysostomum quae exstant omnia*, vol. 1 (1893; repr., Berlin: Weidmann, 1962), 155–79; Donald A. Russell, *Dio Chrysostom: Orations VII, XII and XXXVI*, Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 62–88; see also the text with German translation, commentary, and full bibliography in Hans-Josef Klauck, *Dion von Prusa: Olympische Rede oder Über die erste Erkenntnis Gottes*, Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris ad Ethicam Religionemque pertinentia 2, 2nd ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002); for an edition in Greek and English, see J. W. Cohoon, *Dio Chrysostom*, vol. 2, *Discourses 12–30*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), 2–87. See also the following more detailed studies: Ileana Chirassi, "Il significato religioso del XII discorso di Dione Crisostomo," *Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale* 5 (1963): 266–85; Margaretha Mortenthaler, "Der Olympikos des Dion von Prusa als literarhistorisches und geistesgeschichtliches Dokument" (Diss. phil., University of Vienna, 1979); Paolo Desideri, "Religione e politica nell'Olimpico di Dione," *Quaderni Storici* 15 (1980): 141–61; Andrew Sprague Becker, "The *Theologia Tripertita* in Dio

knowledge of god" (ἡ περὶ τῆς πρώτης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐννοίας). Even if title and subtitle are additions by the ancient editors of Dio's speeches, we should expect some theological reflection, and we will not be disappointed.

The scenic setting is highly relevant for the content of the speech. We should imagine Dio, the speaker, standing on the steps that lead to the temple of Zeus at Olympia. The doors are opened on this occasion, and looking from the outside into the interior, the audience can see the larger-than-life statue of Zeus sitting on his throne and reaching with his head to the tiles. His statue consisted of ivory and gold. It had been fashioned in the fifth century BCE by the famous Athenian sculptor Pheidias and was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World. A contemporary of Dio, the Roman rhetorician Quintilian remarks of this statue that "its beauty even seems to have added something to the received religion, so much did the majesty of the work equal that of the god."³⁶ Following the completion of the statue, one's mental image of Zeus would bear the traits provided by Pheidias (see *Or.* 12.53). Though devoid of a true choice concerning his subject matter on this occasion, Dio plays with the notion of a legitimate decision to be made in 12.21: Should I describe my journey to the Dacians, from which I just returned, or should I engage you in the history of this god? In this setting, with Zeus breathing down your neck, the answer is obvious, and the question of the anthropomorphic representation of the deity simply must arise.

B. Identifying the Elements of the Tripartite Theology

Dio opens the body of his argument in 12.27 with the remarkable statement: "About the nature of the gods in general and of that of the ruler of all (i.e., Zeus) in particular, (there exist) first and above all an opinion and idea that is common to the whole human race, to Greeks and barbarians alike, necessary and implanted in every being endowed with reason, resulting from nature."³⁷ This then is the first knowledge of

Chrysostom's Olympian Oration," *Classical World* 87 (1993): 67–71; Giuseppina Alessandra Cellini, "La fortuna dello Zeus di Fidia: Considerazioni intorno al λόγος ὀλυμπικός di Dione Crisostomo," *Miscellanea greca e romana* 19 (1995): 101–32; Hans Dieter Betz, "Paraenesis and the Concept of God According to *Oratio* XII (Olympikos) of Dio of Prusa," in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, ed. James M. Starr and Troels Engberg-Pedersen, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 125 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 217–34, "God Concept and Cultic Image: The Argument in Dio Chrysostom's *Oratio* 12 (Olympikos)," *Illinois Classical Studies* 29 (2004): 131–42.

³⁶ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 12.10.9: "cuius pulchritudo adiecisse aliquid etiam receptae religioni videtur, adeo maiestas operis deum aequavit."

³⁷ On the continuation of this sentence and its textual problems, see the appendix.

god, as announced in the subtitle of the speech. Impressive as it sounds, there is an extended footnote to it in the following paragraphs. This first, innate notion on its own is a concept without content—in Kantian terms, *Begriff* without *Anschauung*. It functioned originally as a kind of instrument for the structuring of sensual perception. The Greek philosophical term for this would be πρόληψις,³⁸ and Dio indeed uses the related expression ὑπόληψις several times.³⁹ At least for primordial man, the idea of god began to take full shape only in constant interaction with surrounding nature. Dio labors on this point for some time. These first human beings grew up in close contact with the divine being, which demonstrated its presence by the spectacular sights in heaven (e.g., sun, moon, and stars) and on earth (e.g., winds and woods, rivers and forests). Early humans detected the beauty of their voice and invented language (*Or.* 12.28). They were nourished by Mother Earth (*Or.* 12.29–31) and admired the perfect regularity of the seasons of the year (*Or.* 12.32). The résumé of this section reiterates the proposition: “The first source of the conception and perception of the divine simply is the innate idea, common to all human beings” (*Or.* 12.39).

The basic thesis behind this is not so novel and unheard of as it may seem. It is nothing more than the traditional axiom of the existence of the deity based on the consensus of all that is accepted by the main philosophical schools. In Cicero’s *On the Nature of the Gods*, Velleius, the speaker for the Epicureans, defends it, as does Balbus, the voice of the Stoics—both with words surprisingly similar to those of Dio—and Cotta, who represents the Academy, basically consents.⁴⁰ This goes hand-in-hand with deducing the existence of the divine by contemplating the regular movements of the heavenly bodies and the forces of nature.⁴¹ Most significant for us is the fact that this form of theophany is seen in Cicero as part and parcel of philosophical discussion. Yet, up to this point in Dio’s oration he has strictly avoided connecting his first notion of god with philosophy; although in paragraph 38, still within the section on the innate notion (27–39), he does compare his digression on

³⁸ See Cicero, *Nat. Deor.* 1.43, where he speaks in Latin of “some anticipation of gods” and refers to the Greek πρόληψις (that he is translating by *anticipatio*) to Epicurus.

³⁹ In *Or.* 12.39, 40, 44; cf. 17.1.

⁴⁰ See Cicero, *Nat. Deor.* 1.44 (Velleius): “intellegi necesse est esse deos”; 1.65 (Cotta): “concedo esse deos”; 2.12 (Balbus): “omnibus enim innatum est et in animo quasi insculptum esse deos”; cf. 3.7; see also Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.30: omnes tamen esse vim et naturam divinam arbitrantur . . . omni autem in re consensio omnium gentium lex naturae putanda est.” Compare Pierre Boyancé, “Les preuves stoïciennes de l’existence des Dieux d’après Cicéron,” *Hermes* 90 (1962): 45–71.

⁴¹ Cicero, *Nat. Deor.* 2.4, 15; cf. Pseudo-Aristotle, *De Mundo* 399a, lines 1–30.

the mystery cults (33–34) and his invective against the Epicureans (36–37) with the unsteady course of “a philosopher’s thought and speech.”

Dio’s focus on primordial man also leaves us with the question, what about later generations? A possible answer is that they can draw on the idea once it is established. Here a second line of arguments begins. It opens at the end of 12.39 with the concession that there is a second source for the knowledge of god, this time not innate (ἐμφυτος), but acquired (ἐπίκτητος) by three means, namely, λόγοις τε καὶ μύθοις καὶ ἔθεσι, which I would translate as “by reasoning, myths, and customs.” “Myth” does not need much explanation, and “custom” is close enough to law. Thus it makes eminent sense to let λόγοις refer to the rational argument of philosophy, instead of translating it as “narrative accounts,” as Cohoon does.⁴² In other words, here we might find for the first time in the *Olympic Oration* a reference to the three parts of theology, namely, mythical tales, custom/law, and philosophical reflection.⁴³ For the time being, however, we still have to put the last in parentheses.

Keeping track of the diverse types of theology in Dio becomes a bit confusing as one continues through the oration. He first focuses on the poets and the legislators, to whom in 12.42 he attributes the second and third input concerning the knowledge of god (i.e., second and third after the innate concept as number one in this ranking system). Therefore he can summarize in 12.44: “After having provided *three* sources of the perception of the divine among humans, one innate, one poetic, one legal, let us name as the *fourth* both plastic art and the craftsmanship of those who are experienced in the production of divine statues and images.” Here finally art comes in as a separate component, and this is followed by a very colorful description of several techniques of artisans and a list of seven big names, headed by Pheidias (44–46). We might feel that Dio completely loses the thread when he notes that in addition to the three interpreters and teachers of the knowledge about the gods we must add a fourth one, namely, the philosopher (47). But this time he counts poetry, law, and art as numbers one through three and sets the first notion of God aside for this system.⁴⁴ These slight inconsistencies that have confused more than one reader

⁴² Cohoon, *Dio Chrysostom*, 43.

⁴³ This is a matter of dispute. I concur with Pépin, *Mythe et allégorie*, 292, who translates “au moyen de raisons, de récits et d’usages.” Lieberg (“Die ‘theologia tripartita’ in Forschung und Bezeugung,” 95) criticizes Pépin and argues for “Erzählungen der Dichter.”

⁴⁴ Becker (“The *Theologia Tripartita*”) is thus correct in maintaining that Dio, in this new numbering system, does not take the first notion of God into account.

are probably due to the fact that Dio uses and adapts a somewhat differently structured model. The fact that philosophy comes last does not imply a criticism. This may also be a place of honor,⁴⁵ especially since Dio characterizes the philosopher as “perhaps the most reliable and perfect exegete and prophet of the divine nature” (47). That is only the more telling when we consider that Dio, in the famous *Borysthenic Discourse* (*Or.* 36.33–35), says of the poets that they are not truly initiated into the mystery rites.⁴⁶ Rather, they stand outside at the doors and get some glimpses only of what is passing inside.

Before we move on to an interim assessment, we should note that Dio in 12.48 explicitly omits the legislator from further discussion. He also, curiously enough, mentions the games at Olympia and the sacrifices going on at the same time only in passing. Both would have formed part of a public, political theology. He does promise to present a foremost explanation of each of the remaining three departments: poetry, art, and philosophy. While the later parts of the speech take up art (where Pheidias is introduced) and poetry (where Homer takes the leading role), philosophy proper is not discussed (we miss, in other words, Plato). This still needs adequate explanation.

We are now in a position that allows us a preliminary summary. It should be evident that Dio knew the *theologia tripertita* in a form quite similar to the one that we found in Varro and Plutarch. He adapted it to his own goals by transforming it into a structure with five components or better, with one leading component and four others. To do so, he performed some surgery on the pattern. He made two major cuts. He separated poetry and art, which traditionally were both subsumed under the umbrella term “mythical theology.” He also divided religious philosophy into the fundamental construct of an innate knowledge of god and philosophy proper. The theory of an innate perception, broadly dealt with in the first part of the argument, clearly represents a fundamental form of philosophical cosmology. What then is left in Dio for philosophy in a more narrow sense? We might feel inclined to say λόγος, that is, rational argument and reasoning, yet this remains to be seen.

⁴⁵ See Lieberg, “Die ‘theologia tripertita’ in Forschung und Bezeugung,” 73: “Es scheint, als ob für Dion die Philosophen am Ende der überschaubaren Epoche der Menschheitsgeschichte stünden und die Aufgabe hätten, die in der Urzeit spontan und intuitiv entstehende Erkenntnis des Göttlichen in rationaler Bewusstheit mit der Kraft des Logos lehrhaft zu vermitteln.”

⁴⁶ Compare Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, Balbina Bähler, Maximilian Forschner, and Albert de Jong, *Dion von Prusa: Menschliche Gemeinschaft und göttliche Ordnung. Die Borysthenes-Rede, Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris ad Ethicam Religionemque pertinentia 6* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003).

C. Putting Pheidias on Trial

For the final parts of his argument, Dio uses an ingenious rhetorical ploy. He puts Pheidias on trial. The tribunal is formed by all Greeks (12.49). The prosecutor admits that Pheidias has produced a wonderful image. Human visitors in their distress, when confronted with this statue, will forget all their terror and suffering (51). Beyond this accolade, the accuser does have some complaints. Was it justified to give the shape of a human being to the god? Is this still *πρέπον*, that is, fitting (52)? This issue is a particularly pressing one in the case of Pheidias, who has created the canonical portrait of Zeus for generation after generation of the Greeks (53). It is also a philosophical challenge for Dio, since the Stoic founding figure Chrysippus is said to have taught that god does not have human shape.⁴⁷

Pheidias must deliver a defense, and he does so in a spirited apologetic speech (when Dio here makes Pheidias speak, he employs the age-old rhetorical tool of *prosopopoeia* or *ethopoieia*, “speech-in-character”). His first excuse is that he is not the inventor of visual representation for Zeus in anthropomorphic forms. If someone has done this, it was the poets—above all Homer—who knew how to paint in words. Pheidias has simply translated Homer’s literary description into plastic art that comes chronologically later than poetry (56–57).⁴⁸ Pheidias also provides a theoretical underpinning for his project: We give this specific shape to portraits of the divine out of pure need and lack of a better paradigm. We use the human body as a visible symbol to represent what is strictly speaking invisible and cannot be portrayed (59). Representing the divine by animals, as some barbarians do—we will think of the Egyptians—or attributing the name of god to mountains, trees, and stones (61), is no real alternative. Such would border on blasphemy.

Pheidias continues with the thesis that no one seriously maintains that it would have been better not to have any statue or imagery of the gods at all (60). Here Dio, who guides Pheidias like a puppet on a string, distorts the evidence. We only have to look at his slightly earlier

⁴⁷ SVF II, 1021, from Diogenes Laertius 7.147: μή εἶναι μέντοι ἀνθρωπόμορφον; the criticism by Zeno in SVF I 264 seems more focused on buildings (ἱερὰ) than on statues, though the latter may be implied. The literature on this topic is immense; on Dio in particular, see Charly Clerc, *Les théories relatives au culte des images chez les auteurs grecs du II^e siècle après J.-C.* (Paris: de Boccard, 1915), 194–229; Vittorio Fazzo, *La giustificazione delle immagini religiose dalla tarda antichità al cristianesimo*, vol. 1, *La tarda antichità (con un’Appendice sull’Iconoclasmo bizantino)* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1977), 21–59; Alain Billaut, “Dion Chrysostome avait-il une théorie de la sculpture?” *Bulletin de l’Association Guillaume Budé* (1999): 211–29; a valuable study on more general lines is Moshe Barasch, *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea* (New York: New York University Press, 1992).

⁴⁸ See esp. *Iliad* 1.528–30; cf. Dio, *Or.* 12.26, 62.

contemporary Pliny the Elder, who comments, "I consider the search for a likeness (*effigiem*) of god a sign of human imbecility. Whoever is god—if there is such a being—and in whatever part of the world, he is fully mind, fully sight, fully hearing, fully soul."⁴⁹ But this suppression of critical voices—of Stoic voices even—allows Dio to marshal through Pheidias an additional argument in favor of statues by comparison. We should look at this remarkable text in full:

Because of the impulse towards the divine a strong desire exists in all human beings to honor and venerate the deity, by approaching and touching him, by offering sacrifices and crowning him. For just as little children, who have been torn away from father and mother and feel a terrible longing and desire, stretch often out their hands in dreams to the parents not present, thus also human beings behave towards the gods. They love them rightly because of their benefactions and our kinship with them and desire to be with them and spend time with them in every possible way. (60–61)

Stretching out your hands also is a gesture of prayer. The conclusion is that we do need some material object to fulfill this legitimate desire. By this successful comparison Dio strongly appeals to the emotions of the audience. He is arguing by pathos. But this should not lead us to ignore another implication of this moving episode. The wish to have statues at your disposition is compared to an infantile behavior (in the text, it is not just "children," but "infant children," *νήπιοι παῖδες*), not yet fully mature and somewhat dreamlike. This corresponds to the sub-text of the previous paragraph: statues are only the second best option, needed in the absence of better paradigms.

Pheidias then ventures on an extended conversation with Homer, whom he even addresses directly: "O Homer, wisest of the poets, you will agree . . ." (73)—a second-level rhetorical apostrophe. Not explicitly, but implicitly he declares his own achievement superior to that of Homer. Why is this? Because some of Homer's portraits of the god are fear inspiring and terrifying (73). Homer's Zeus is also the god of war and thunderstorms. He flashes lightning and sends death and destruction (78). Pheidias's statue, on the contrary, exudes pure benevolence and goodwill. His Zeus is peaceful and gentle; he serves as overseer of a united and faction-free Greece (74). A long list of corresponding titles of Zeus is compiled from myth and poetry. He is "Father and King," "Protector of Cities," "Guardian of Friendship," "Refuge of Suppliants," and more (75). The Zeus of Pheidias, in other words, is a purer version of the Zeus than that of Homer. All traces of cruelty and harshness that are still present in some subordinate details

⁴⁹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 2.14.

of the canonical statue have been eliminated; only the benefactor and savior are left.⁵⁰ This portrait could also stand the test of philosophical criticism of religion. No wonder that Pheidias wins the contest and his trial.

The peroration of the speech is short, but Dio has a new rhetorical device in store for us. Even the statue of Zeus is brought into action. Dio, almost imagining that Zeus is addressing the assembly, reports what he hears Zeus saying (again a clever use of *prosopopoeia*; according to Quintilian, "this kind of speech makes it possible to bring gods down from heaven and to raise them up from below").⁵¹ Ironically, among other things, Zeus quotes two lines of "the very Homer who has contributed to his own conceptualization."⁵² Here it is Dio, who makes "Dia" speak ("Dia" being the accusative of Zeus).⁵³ This certainly tells us something about his self-understanding as an itinerant orator.

D. Constructing an Audience and Vindicating Philosophy

We have learned in our discussion of Plutarch and Varro that authors develop certain tendencies when using the pattern of the tripartite theology. They adapt the model to their particular contexts; they apply its components in different ways to the elite and the masses, respectively; and they reduce the triad to a dual or even unified structure. All this also holds true for Dio.

The pressures from the context of the speech's delivery upon Dio are self-evident. That he singles out art as a special field of theology is due to the overwhelming presence of Pheidias's famous statue of Zeus at Olympia. Another factor is the presence of a large, pan-Hellenic audience that even a speaker as renowned as Dio would find at the sanctuaries only on occasion of the important festivals.⁵⁴ This addition-

⁵⁰ See Balbina Bäbler, "Der Zeus von Olympia," in Klauck, *Dion von Prusa*, 222–23.

⁵¹ Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 9.2.31.

⁵² George Alexander Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World, 300 B.C.–A.D. 300* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 578; for an insightful political reading of the peroration, see Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, AD 50–250* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 200–202.

⁵³ I owe this observation to John Moles, "Dio Chrysostom, Greece, and Rome," in *Ethics and Rhetoric: Classical Essays for Donald Russell on His Seventy-fifth Birthday*, ed. Doreen Innes, Harry Hine, and Christopher Pelling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 177–192, 183 n. 23: "It is also Δίῳ who makes Δία speak."

⁵⁴ Johannes Hahn, *Der Philosoph und die Gesellschaft: Selbstverständnis, öffentliches Auftreten und populäre Erwartungen in der hohen Kaiserzeit*, Heidelberger althistorische Beiträge und epigraphische Studien 7 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1989), 144: "In der griechisch-sprachigen Welt stellten Heiligtümer und die großen panhellenischen Festversammlungen weitere Anziehungspunkte von besonderer Ausstrahlung für etablierte Philosophen wie auch wandernde Kyniker dar."

ally prompts him toward relevant speech and the discussion of important topics.

Dio, however, also carefully selects his own audience and constructs it by his speech.⁵⁵ Often ignored is a short passage in section 43 of the *Olympic Oration* that is inserted just between the section on poetry and law and the section on art and philosophy:⁵⁶

Now I on my part observe that for the many (τοῖς πολλοῖς) precision is troublesome, and not the least precision in words. Their only concern is about quantity. They provide no introduction or division of the subject matter, nor do they start their speeches with any proper beginning. Instead, as the saying is, "with unwashed feet" they simply go through the obvious, bare points. Now there is no great harm in "unwashed feet" for those who go through mud and lots of filth. But an unskilled tongue becomes no small damage to those who listen. However, there is the probability that the educated persons (τοὺς πεπαιδωμένους), of whom to take some notice is a worthy thing, will keep up with us and share the labour to the end, until we have settled our arguments again to a straight path, as if (coming from) some winding and rough ground.

Dio combines a sideswipe at other less skillful orators with an allusion to the apparent meandering of his own speech (see 12.16, 38). The educated few will—he adeptly maintains—follow the argument without difficulty. Dio's performance aims at the elite, not at the vulgar crowd. This might be construed as slander, and people might take offense. Actually they do not because there is a rhetorical trick at work. Everybody in the audience is free to count himself or herself among those who are educated and understand the finer points and the subtext. Most will follow this implicit invitation. Thus the slander is turned into flattery. There is no real tension between this strategy and the final statement in 12.84 that the speech has been "fine tuned both for philosophers and for the crowd." All listeners should be turned into philosophers by now.

This brings us to Dio's restructuring of the tripartite theology. Dio has not only expanded it from three to five components but has also reduced it. The legislators and political theology along with them are mainly ignored. The remaining four elements fall into two pairs, with

⁵⁵ See Martin Korenjak, *Publikum und Redner: Ihre Interaktion in der sophistischen Rhetorik der Kaiserzeit*, *Zetemata* 104 (Munich: Beck, 2000).

⁵⁶ The passage seems curious to some editors; cf. Russell, *Dio Chrysostom*, 190: "another methodological section, not really in place here"; he refers to Adolph Emperius (*Dionis Chrysostomi opera graece*, vol. 1 [Braunschweig: Westermann, 1849], 232), who transposed it to 12.26. But see H. van Herwerden ("Observationes ad novissimum textum Dionis Chrysostomi," *Mnemosyne* 22 [1894]: 125–61, 141), who silently retracts his former preference of the transposing ("Ad Dionem Chrysostomum," *Hermes* 7 [1873]: 72–90, 77).

poetry and art on one side and the first knowledge of god and philosophy on the other. This leaves us in the end only with mythical theology, which is suited to the many, and natural theology as a task of philosophy, which is for the educated elite. We might ask, why did Dio split up philosophy at all? One answer might be that in his new arrangement we start and we end with philosophy.⁵⁷ It lays the foundations, and it reflects on the larger more complete picture.

This also solves the other problem we had, namely, that Dio announces a leading representative of philosophy but never introduces one. The sculptor Pheidias outlines a concept of Zeus that is concordant with Stoic philosophy. His superiority compared to Homer rests on the fact that he argues the case of the philosopher. Pheidias in turn is the mouthpiece of Dio. We do not need any other top figure of philosophy when we have Dio delivering the full speech (he certainly did not suffer from false modesty). We also remember the characterization of the philosopher as "the most reliable and perfect exegete and prophet of the divine nature" in 12.47, quoted above.

This reading of the speech is confirmed by its introduction, the so-called *prolalia*,⁵⁸ in 12.1–15 (or 12.1–16), an entertaining piece "on a deceptively light note."⁵⁹ We hear of a drab owl and a magnificent peacock, of swans and nightingales. Dio is the owl, and he compares himself unfavorably with sophistic peacocks, poetic swans, and lyric nightingales. Yet, the birds flock to the owl, and the crowds to Dio. This strongly evokes the scenery of Athens at the times of Socrates and his battles with the sophists.⁶⁰ It comes as no surprise that Socrates is mentioned by name in the *prolalia* in 12.14 (as is Pheidias in 12.6).

Who then is vindicated in the end, the sculptor or the philosopher, the anthropomorphic icon or serious reflection on nature and god? In some ways both are vindicated. Dio defends the icon and gives good reasons for it. This is, however, at best a half-truth. One who wants to learn more about these sensitive issues has no choice but to turn to natural, that is, philosophical theology.

⁵⁷ We find the root φιλοσοφ- in 12.9 (twice), 26, 38, 48, 84; comparable with the reflection in 12.43 is the remark on the true philosopher at the end of 12.48.

⁵⁸ On the genre and examples, see Mortenthaler, "Olympikos," 9–24; Karl Mras, "Die προλαλία bei den griechischen Schriftstellern," *Wiener Studien* 64 (1949): 71–81; Hans-Günther Nesselrath, "Lucian's Introductions," in *Antonine Literature*, ed. Donald A. Russell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 111–40.

⁵⁹ Betz, "Paraenesis and the Concept of God," 222; see also the perceptive analysis of the *prolalia* in Krause, *Strategie der Selbstinszenierung*, 84–89.

⁶⁰ Aldo Brancacci, "Dio, Socrates, and Cynism," in *Dio Chrysostom: Politics, Letters, and Philosophy*, ed. Simon Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 240–60; see also Michael Trapp, "Plato in Dio," in Swain, *Dio Chrysostom*, 213–39.

IV. CONCLUSION

"They have worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator"; this verse of Rom. 1:25 is quoted by Augustine in his lengthy argument with Varro (*Civ.* 4.29). Other Christian apologists, such as Tertullian⁶¹ and Eusebius,⁶² also interacted with this pattern. By way of conclusion, we might want to know, what about our earlier Jewish-Christian sources?

Philo of Alexandria and the *Wisdom of Solomon* knew the *theologia tripartita*, as has recently been shown in a conclusive way.⁶³ Both authors, Philo and the anonymous author of the book of Wisdom, contrast the tripartite theology with the first two commandments of the Decalogue: you shall not have other gods besides me and you shall not make for yourself an idol (Exod. 20:3–4; Deut. 5:7–8), which is an obvious choice. Of special interest is the long digression on pagan religion in Ws. 13–15. First the author mentions those people who mistook fire or wind or the stars of heaven for gods, amazed at their power and working (13:2–5). He concedes that they did desire to find God through their search, though they finally go astray (13:6–9). The author then offers a satirical description of the fabrication of idols of wood and clay (13:10–19; 15:7–13) and deplores the utter madness of animal worship (15:14–17). He also explains how pagan cults came into being (14:19–21) and what devastating effects they have on social, public life (14:22–31). We recognize here both the model and the logical closeness to what Paul does in Rom. 1:18–32, where the Decalogue could also form an intertextual point of reference.

When we look at the New Testament, Paul's Areopagus speech in Acts 17 and his seminal theory of religion in Rom. 1:18–25 immediately come to mind.⁶⁴ Parallels between Dio's *Olympic Oration* and the Areopagus Speech, which Luke gives to Paul by prosopopoeia, have often been noted—notably by Eduard Norden in his much acclaimed study

⁶¹ See Tertullian, *Ad nationes* 2.1.8–1 and Jean-Claude Fredouille, "La théologie tripartite, modèle apologétique (Athénagore, Théophile, Tertullien)," in *Res Sacrae: Hommages à Henri Le Bonniec*, ed. D. Porte and J.-P. Néraudau, Collection Latomus 201 (Brussels: Latomus, 1988), 220–35.

⁶² In *Praeparatio evangelica*, 4.1.1–4, evaluated by Pépin, *Mythe et allégorie*, 293–96; Lieberg, "Die theologia tripartita als Formprinzip," 47–53; in Eusebius, mythical theology is also called ἱστορικόν and physical theology θεωρητικόν.

⁶³ Johannes Woyke, *Götter, "Götzen," Götterbilder: Aspekte einer paulinischen "Theologie der Religionen,"* Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 132 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 421–27.

⁶⁴ On this topic I refer to the study of Hans Dieter Betz, "Christianity as Religion: Paul's Attempt at Definition in Romans," *Journal of Religion* 17 (1991): 315–44, also in *Paulinische Studien: Gesammelte Aufsätze III* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994), 206–39; see also Woyke, *Götter, "Götzen," Götterbilder*.

Agnostos Theos.⁶⁵ In Acts 17 the Lukan Paul gets angry when confronted with a city full of idols (Acts 17:16), but then he compliments his audience for their deep religiosity (Acts 17:22) and sides with the educated among them by drawing on philosophical criticism of popular religious practice: God does not need anything (Acts 17:25), he is not like an image formed by art (Acts 17:29), and so on.

In Paul's own voice, I quote Rom. 1:19–20: "Therefore the knowledgeable of God is manifest among them, for God has shown it to them. For the invisible things about him, that is his eternal power and divine nature, are seen from the creation of the world, when perceived intellectually through the things made, so that they are without excuse." This should first and above all be taken at face value, though Paul in the following verses will somewhat deconstruct this concept. He also ends his invective with social vices (Rom. 1:28–32), and he has different audiences in mind, Greeks and barbarians, the wise and the foolish (Rom. 1:14). These points alone should be enough to make a comparison with our model in three parts fruitful.

I would not go so far as to maintain that Paul and Luke had a first-hand acquaintance of the tripartite theology, though this is not completely inconceivable. Yet, they do have some information about basic features of a broader religious discourse that was being carried on in several fields around them. The *theologia tripartita* served as a convenient tool for summarizing, ordering, and evaluating these general trends. This is a service that it can still provide for us,⁶⁶ when we try to understand the multiform and colorful religious world of the first two centuries CE, in which Christianity was born.

Appendix

Appended Note on a Textual Problem in Dio Chrysostom's *Olympic Oration* 12.27

There is a textual problem (one of many in this speech) at the end of the important passage in *Or.* 12.27. In the majority of the manuscript, the sentence quoted above continues as follows: ". . . without a mortal teacher and mystagogue, outside of deceit and joy (χωρίς ἀπάτης καὶ χαρᾶς), both because of (διὰ)⁶⁷ the kinship toward them (i.e., the gods) and the many testimonies of

⁶⁵ Eduard Norden, *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte religiöser Rede* (1913; repr., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974), 18–19.

⁶⁶ James B. Rives (*Religion in the Roman Empire* [Oxford: Blackwell, 2007], 21–42), e.g., uses a fourfold scheme, based on the *theologia tripartita* and adapted from Dio, as a structuring device.

⁶⁷ I do not further discuss the emending of διὰ into ἐδήλου, "it rendered manifest", in Cohoon, *Dio Chrysostom*, 30.

the truth, which did not permit the oldest and most ancient human beings to be bewildered or become negligent." This leaves us with at least two difficulties, a syntactical and a semantic one. The long sentence of 12.27 does not seem to have a finite verb (syntax), and "without joy" seems to fit the context only poorly (semantics).

There are two strategies for solving these problems. With regard to the syntax, the sentence could be seen as loosely constructed, the participles functioning as finite verbs, an ἔστιν could be supplied, or a main verb could be thought missing.⁶⁸ Then the editor is left with only the semantics. One might simply delete καὶ χαρᾶς because of dittography with χωρίς,⁶⁹ or try to find a better expression than καὶ χαρᾶς. There are quite a few suggestions to this effect:⁷⁰

καὶ παραχῆς, "and agitation" (Reiske);

καὶ φθορᾶς, "and depravation" (Emperius);

καὶ χορείας, "and dance" (Geel);⁷¹

καὶ φλυαρίας, "and foolery" (Wenkebach);⁷²

χωρίς ἀπάτης γλισχρᾶς, "without *mean* deceit" (Theiler).⁷³

Especially "and dance" in Geel, but also Reiske's "agitation," makes one wonder, why should καὶ χαρᾶς be changed at all?

The second option is to insist on the garbled syntax, look for the missing verb, and locate it behind καὶ χαρᾶς. Already in the manuscript tradition some replace καὶ χαρᾶς with χωρεῖ. Von Arnim favors this approach ("in καὶ χαρᾶς latet verbum totius enuntiati")⁷⁴ and suggests κατεῖχε, "it held fast," as the verb. Derganc reads χωρίς ἀπάτης ὑπῆρχε, "it exists without deceit."⁷⁵ Cohoon decides on Sauppe's κενώρηκεν, "it has made its way," that seems derived from the secondary manuscript reading χωρεῖ. The latest conjecture comes from Russell. He emends καὶ χαρᾶς to κεκράτηκε, "it has come to prevail," the subject still being the common concept and idea of god.⁷⁶ The text reads very well then: "About the nature of the gods in general and concerning that of the ruler of all in particular, first and above all an opinion and idea . . . *has come to prevail*, without a mortal teacher and mystagogue, outside of deceit, because of the kinship towards them." Of the available emendations Russell's is perhaps the best.

⁶⁸ Thus Russell, *Dio Chrysostom*, 178, in his commentary.

⁶⁹ Thus Emperius (*Dionis Chrysostomi opera graece*, 232) in his edition; mentioned as only modern emendation in Guy de Budé, *Dionis Chrysostomi orationes*, vol. 1, Bibliotheca Teubneriana (Leipzig: Teubner, 1916), 206.

⁷⁰ For the names of editors, see generally the apparatuses in von Arnim (*Dionis Prusaensis*) and Russell (*Dio Chrysostom*).

⁷¹ See Jacob Geel (*Dionis Chrysostomi Ὀλυμπικός* [Leiden: Luchtmans, 1840], 67) in his commentary, referring to the mystery ritual of "enthroning" and dancing around mentioned in *Or.* 12.33.

⁷² Ernst Wenkebach, "Die Überlieferung der Schriften des Dion von Prusa," *Hermes* 79 (1944): 40–65, 57.

⁷³ Willy Theiler, *Poseidonios: Die Fragmente*, vol. 1, Texte und Kommentare 10.1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1982), 291.

⁷⁴ *Or.* 12, 162.

⁷⁵ Anton Derganc, "Textkritische Bemerkungen zu einigen Reden des Dio von Prusa," *Jahresbericht des k. k. Sophiengymnasiums in Wien für das Schuljahr 1909/10* (Wien: Selbstverlag des k. k. Sophiengymnasiums, 1910), 3–22, 9.

⁷⁶ This reading has been adopted in Klauck, *Dion von Prusa*, 62, 124 n. 134.

The real question, however, remains. Do we need a conjecture at all, or should we follow the majority reading of the manuscripts *χωρὶς ἀπάτης καὶ χαρᾶς*? The semantic difficulty may not be as relevant as formerly thought. We have just learned that the original concept of god came into existence apart from any human mediator, namely, "without a mortal teacher and mystagogue." The expression "mystagogue" alludes to the mystery cults that Dio adduces shortly afterward and more extensively in 12.33. Initiation, as we know, could lead to joy as a result. "Without deceit and joy" might therefore run exactly parallel to "without a mortal teacher and mystagogue." As teacher this person produces deceit, as mystagogue, joy; but in this context the latter is not seen as a positive outcome. "Joy" could be understood more as an unnecessary and an unworthy source of the knowledge of god or as a secondary reinforcement that an intelligent being does not need, and it therefore parallels "deceit." Stylistically, Dio is extremely fond of the hendiadys and loves to heap one upon the other. It is to the credit of Russell that in spite of his ingenious conjecture he still reckons with this possibility, when he writes, "Not that *χαρᾶς* itself is quite impossible: the mysteries involve trickery and joyful revelation."⁷⁷ Cumulatively, emendations should be kept to the unavoidable minimum. In the case of *Or.* 12.27, I feel more comfortable with preserving the manuscript reading *χωρὶς ἀπάτης καὶ χαρᾶς*.

⁷⁷ Russell, *Dio Chrysostom*, 177.

The Role of the Protestant Confessions in Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith*

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The reader of Friedrich Schleiermacher's dogmatics faces a number of formidable hermeneutical challenges. Not the least of these are the forests of quotations in the original Latin from often obscure documents (e.g., the *Declaration of Thorn*), presented en masse in blocks at the beginning of the discussion of individual doctrines or scattered throughout in sometimes quite lengthy footnotes. The solution most of us adopt, I suspect, especially those of us who have no knowledge of Latin, is simply to skip over the quotations and not worry about what we are missing.¹ Rather, we move on to the task of unraveling Schleiermacher's dense paragraphs, noting in passing those quotations from the Augsburg Confession that, originally in German, have been rendered into English by the tough-minded Scottish translators who simply assumed that anyone who picked up *The Christian Faith* would know their Latin and Greek.

A guilty conscience lingers, though, because to the attentive reader §27 suggests that the quotations, which come for the most part from sixteenth-century Protestant confessions, both Lutheran and Reformed, function as dogmatic norms: "all propositions which claim a place in

¹ It is possible, however, by utilizing the critical apparatus of the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, to locate Schleiermacher's quotations in the standard American translations of the Lutheran and Reformed confessions. See Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (KGA) I/13, *Der Christliche Glaube*, ed. Rolf Schäfer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003). References to the KGA are in the form: KGA part/volume/partial volume (where relevant), and page numbers. I will give Schleiermacher's quotations from the confessional writings according to the following translations: *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Weingert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), cited in the text as K&W; *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Arthur C. Cochrane (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003), cited in the text as Cochrane; *The Catechism of the Council of Trent*, trans. John A. McHugh and Charles J. Callan (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1982). I am indebted to David Carey of the philosophy department of Whitman College for his assistance with identifications of the relevant passages and some translations from Latin and Greek. I am, of course, fully aware of the limitations of this procedure.

an epitome of Evangelical (Protestant) doctrine must approve themselves . . . by appeal to Evangelical confessional documents."² This proposition and Schleiermacher's subsequent practice raise a number of interpretive questions. If the confessions are normative, in what sense are they so? What is the actual systematic function of the Lutheran and Reformed confessions in the *Glaubenslehre*? To what extent does the material content of the confessions determine the parameters of Schleiermacher's own construal of Christian doctrines?

These specific questions about the systematic function and the doctrinal content of the confessions open up a much broader question. To use the terminology made prominent by Ernst Troeltsch, whereas the confessions are documents of Old Protestantism, Schleiermacher is the pathfinding theologian of New Protestantism.³ What are these Old Protestant texts doing in the first New Protestant dogmatics? Do they possess enduring normative force in the modern, post-Enlightenment world? Do they perhaps limit and constrain Schleiermacher's revisionist enterprise, putting conservative brakes on the radicalism of the youthful *Speeches*?⁴ At stake are large questions about Schleiermacher's relationship to the heritage of the Reformation, about continuity and change in the development of Protestant doctrine, about the relationship between Old Protestantism and New Protestantism.⁵

I will argue that Schleiermacher's dogmatics, *The Christian Faith*, cannot be fully understood without taking his dialogue with the Protestant confessions into account. Schleiermacher is thoroughly conversant with

² Friederich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, trans. and ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (1928; repr., New York: Scribner's, 1968), 112. All quotations from the *Glaubenslehre* are from this translation; references will be given in the text by proposition number or, where relevant, by section number; page numbers will be preceded by the abbreviation CF.

³ Ernst Troeltsch, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 7, *Protestantisches Christentum und Kirche in der Neuzeit*, ed. Volker Drehsen, in collaboration with Christian Albrecht (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004); see 474–502 on the theology of New Protestantism, esp. 483–85 on Schleiermacher, and, for Troeltsch's overarching analysis of Old and New Protestantism, see 81–134 and 308–22.

⁴ Troeltsch (*Protestantisches Christentum und Kirche*, 485), for one, thought that "Schleiermacher, in his great practical influence as a church theologian, retreated to a remarkable extent from the greatness and breadth of his youthful ideas."

⁵ The most extensive recent treatment of these issues that I am familiar with is Martin Ohst's wide-ranging dissertation, *Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie, vol. 77 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1989). Ohst's study is very thorough, taking into account Schleiermacher's relevant essays on the confessions, as well as his lectures on Christian ethics and on church history, numerous sermons (including the important 1830 series on the Augsburg Confession), and some additional texts. But as extensive as Ohst's study is, even it is not comprehensive, for his analysis of the *Glaubenslehre* is limited to the introduction and doctrines of sin and the Lord's Supper. Since his work is based on the first edition of *The Christian Faith*, whereas my own analyzes the second, I have, in order to avoid becoming entangled in questions of the differences between the two editions, made somewhat limited use of it here.

the theology of the Reformation, with which he is in constant critical conversation. His relation to the confessions is highly differentiated. He denies that they have binding normative authority; they do not constitute a Protestant magisterium. Yet they must be taken seriously as initial statements of the distinctively Protestant perspective—a perspective that is subject to further development. The systematic function of the confessions varies from doctrine to doctrine. In some instances, Schleiermacher develops his own doctrinal position independently, without reference to the confessions. Typically he then turns to demonstrating the continuity of his revisionist formulations with the confessional language, or to reinterpreting it, critically reformulating and qualifying it, or even rejecting it. In other loci the confessions play a foundational role, setting the terms of the discussion by framing the distinctively Protestant stance. Schleiermacher's relation to the confessions is varied and complex, yet he consistently takes them into account. Schleiermacher's New Protestant dogmatics may revise, reinterpret, or reject the old language, but it always seeks to remain in continuity with the essence of Protestantism as embodied in the confessions.⁶

My argument unfolds in three steps. Section I considers two essays, from 1819 and 1831, that serve both to clarify Schleiermacher's position on the normative status of the confessions and to contextualize it in the theological controversies of his day. Section II analyzes Schleiermacher's methodological clarification, in the introduction to *The Christian Faith*, of the function of the references to the confessions in his dogmatics. Section III, the heart of the case, focuses on Schleiermacher's actual practice in the *Glaubenslehre*, analyzing the role of the confessions in selected doctrines from the discussion of sin and redemption.

I. CONTEXT

Schleiermacher's systematic position on the role of the Old Protestant confessions in contemporary dogmatics did not emerge in a vacuum. Considerable light is thrown on the narrower questions of the formal role and material function of the Protestant confessions in the *Glaubenslehre*

⁶ Thus I am in substantial agreement with Ohst's (*Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 267) conclusion: "With Schleiermacher . . . a period in the history of Protestant theology begins which is essentially defined by the striving for an interpretation and reception of Reformation theology that would be fruitful for the modern world." My study deepens and extends his work by analyzing the differentiated systematic function and material relation to the confessions in *The Christian Faith*.

benslehre by attending to the historical context of Schleiermacher's systematic theory and practice. Two essays—a consideration of the “proper value and binding authority of the symbolic books,” published in 1819, and an open letter to professors Daniel von Coelln and David Schulz, published in 1831—are particularly relevant.⁷ Both texts have their context in controversies that arose in relationship to two significant anniversaries: the celebrations of the Reformation in 1817 and of the Augsburg Confession in 1830.

The earlier essay is the culmination of a series of events.⁸ First, in association with the three hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, King Friedrich Wilhelm III called for the Union of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches of Prussia in 1817. Although that call did not meet with universal approval, Schleiermacher strongly advocated it, having put forward a similar idea in 1804.⁹ Second, Claus Harms issued his own ninety-five theses in 1817. Harms was primarily concerned about rationalism in the Lutheran communion, but he was an opponent of church union as well. He used his ninety-five theses not only to attack rationalism but also to argue for the normative status of the Lutheran confessions: “We have a firm biblical word, to which we are attentive (2 Peter 1:19), and so that no one can turn it like a weather vane, we have our symbolic books [thesis 50]. . . . [The confessions] are nothing other than a generally accepted definitive interpretation of the Holy Scriptures [thesis 83].”¹⁰ Finally, Christoph Friedrich Ammon published an essay in support of Harms's theses.¹¹ Ammon, who had formerly been a rationalist and with whom Schleiermacher had been in correspondence about the pending Church union, did here (in the words of Iain Nicol) a “complete volte-face,” much to the irritation of Schleier-

⁷ Both texts have been published in *KGA I/10, Theologisch-dogmatische Abhandlungen und Gelegenheitschriften*, ed. Hans-Friedrich Traulsen with the assistance of Martin Ohst (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990). They have been translated by Iain Nicol, *Friedrich Schleiermacher on Creeds, Confessions and Church Union*, Schleiermacher Studies and Translations, vol. 24 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2004). Unless otherwise noted, I have followed Nicol's translation; references will be given in the text as Nicol and *KGA*, respectively.

⁸ Nicol's “Introduction” (1–16) and the *KGA* editors' “Historical Introduction” (xv–xxx, xxxvi–xlv) provide the necessary information on the context. See also Ohst's analysis (*Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 153–57).

⁹ Friederich Schleiermacher, *Zwei unvorgreifliche Gutachten in Sachen des protestantischen Kirchenwesens zunächst in Beziehung auf den Preussischen Staat*, *KGA I/4, Schriften aus der Stolper Zeit*, ed. Eilert Herms, Günter Meckenstock, and Michael Pietsch (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002), 367–408.

¹⁰ Claus Harms, *Ausgewählte Schriften und Predigten*, ed. Peter Meinhold, 2 vols. (Flensburg: Christian Wolf, 1955), 1:218, 223.

¹¹ Christoph Friedrich Ammon, “Bittere Arznei für die Glaubensschwäche der Zeit,” in *KGA I/10*, 429–43.

ermacher (Nicol 6). Schleiermacher wrote a sharp reply to Ammon.¹² After asking Ammon whether he really agreed with Harms's fiftieth and eighty-third theses, Schleiermacher commented ascerbically: "Any church that affirms this point as a matter of principle is not Evangelical but is of a traditional nature like the Roman church, no matter how many dogmas and practices it may have changed."¹³ Already in the controversy provoked by Harms's theses and Ammon's essay, Schleiermacher was staking out a position that opposed the normatively binding status of the Protestant confessions.

In this context Schleiermacher wrote his essay "Über den eigenthümlichen Wert und das bindende Ansehen symbolischer Bücher." As Nicol quite rightly points out, in this essay Schleiermacher is steering a middle course between two extreme positions, the confessionalist and the rationalist (Nicol 10). On the one hand, "some among us want to retain a binding authority for the church's confessional writings where it already exists, and to attribute the same such authority to them where it does not exist." On the other hand, others would completely historicize and relativize these documents: "since these confessional writings were meant only for their time, they should be viewed simply as memorials of that time" (Nicol 163, *KGA I/10*, 121).

Schleiermacher's middle ground is stated in his thesis that "both sides are mistaken in what they affirm and they are right in what they deny" (Nicol 163, *KGA I/10*, 121). The confessionalists are mistaken in claiming that the confessions ought to have binding authority, whereas the rationalists are mistaken in asserting that the confessions were relevant only for their own time.¹⁴ Schleiermacher goes on to develop a series of arguments against both extreme positions. Against the confessionalists his arguments range from the theological (for Protestants scripture alone is normative) to the practical (requiring Protestant clergy to subscribe to the letter of the symbolic books would interfere in the delicate relationship between clergy and congregation) to the consequentialist (any such binding status would ruin Protestant theology and exegesis by depriving them of freedom). He concludes that

¹² Friederich Schleiermacher, "An Herrn Oberhofprediger D. Ammon über seine Prüfung der Harmsischen Sätze," *KGA I/10*, 21–92; translation in Nicol 65–146.

¹³ Nicol 71, *KGA I/10*, 27. My attention was drawn to this important material by Ohst's discussion (*Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 183–84).

¹⁴ It is not entirely clear what Schleiermacher finds right in the two positions, but apparently he means that the confessionalists are right to fear the "decay" of the Church, and the rationalists are right to hold that "freedom of spirit" is "necessary for preserving a living faith" (Nicol 163, *KGA I/10*, 121). This is also Ohst's interpretation (*Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 154).

“the distinctive value of the symbolic books does not consist in the binding authority that some people seek to establish for them” (Nicol 179, *KGA I/10*, 135). Against the rationalists Schleiermacher points out that “the symbolic books are the first in which the Protestant spirit was expressed in a public and permanent way” (Nicol 184, *KGA I/10*, 138–39). Because, unlike scripture, the symbolic books were directed “externally,” in defense of Protestantism, they “contain the points on the basis of which all Protestants must proceed and therefore around which we, too, must always rally, and we cannot acknowledge anyone who knowingly and willingly departs from them to be a true Protestant” (Nicol 187, *KGA I/10*).¹⁵ The confessions count, then, as a way of identifying distinctively Protestant belief and practice. But their authority is limited, as Schleiermacher’s proposed oath of allegiance to the symbolic books makes clear: “I declare that I find everything that is taught in our symbolic books against the errors and abuses of the Roman Catholic Church, especially in the articles on justification and good works, on the church and ecclesiastical power, on the mass, on the worship of the saints, and on vows, to be in complete agreement with Holy Scripture and with the original teaching of the Church; and that as long as I am entrusted with the teaching office I will not cease to expound these teachings and to uphold the orders in the church that are appropriate to them” (Nicol 187 [translation slightly modified], *KGA I/10*, 141).

As is typical of his approach in the *Glaubenslehre* itself, Schleiermacher, in the midst of the controversies that broke out in 1817, is treading a middle path between the positions of the theological left (Enlightenment rationalism) and of the right (the confessionalism that emerged after the wars of liberation against Napoleon). On the one hand, he rejects a strict, legally binding authority of the confessions; contemporary thought should not be tied down to sixteenth-century formulations. On the other hand, he resists the other extreme of rejecting the confessions as purely antiquated expressions that need no longer be taken seriously. Since they state the distinctively Protestant stance over against Catholicism, they still have a role. But has he really solved the problem? How can the position enunciated here be translated into dogmatic practice?

A second essay that illuminates the theory and practice of the *Glaubenslehre* is Schleiermacher’s open letter of April 1830 to Daniel von Coelln and David Schulz, professors of theology in Breslau.¹⁶ Again,

¹⁵ The Nicol translation erroneously has “internally” for “nach außen” here.

¹⁶ See Ohst’s analysis (*Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 158–74).

there is a complicated context. This open letter was written in the aftermath of the so-called *Hallenser Theologenstreit* and on the eve of the tricentennial celebration of the Augsburg Confession. The controversy over the Halle theologians was provoked by an anonymous article (actually written by Ernst Ludwig von Gerlach), "Der Rationalismus auf der Universität Halle," published in Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg's conservative journal, *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung*.¹⁷ In it the author complained about the heterodoxy of the theological faculty of Halle, targeting in particular Wilhelm Gesenius and J. A. L. Wegscheider.¹⁸ At issue was the academic freedom of theology professors. The author contended that professors of theology at German universities, as employees of the state who were responsible for the education of future clergy in the Protestant state churches, do not have and should not have unrestricted academic freedom. Professors of theology have a duty to present "pure doctrine according to the confessional writings of the church."¹⁹

Von Coelln and Schulz spoke up in defense of the academic freedom of theology professors in their essay "Über theologische Lehrfreiheit auf den evangelischen Universitäten und deren Beschränkung durch symbolischer Bücher," and it was this publication that occasioned Schleiermacher's open letter.²⁰ Although Schleiermacher agreed with the coauthors' defense of academic freedom in theological faculties, he took issue with a number of aspects of their case. For one thing, he did not share the authors' concern that the upcoming festival in celebration of the tricentennial of the Augsburg Confession might be the occasion for introducing such an obligatory status for it as advocated in von Gerlach's article: "It is not the document that is celebrated, but the deed" (Nicol 221, *KGA* I/10, 401). That is, it is not the actual theological content of the Augsburg Confession that is celebrated but rather the act of giving a public accounting of Protestant faith and practice before the Emperor and princes.²¹ What is essential in the Augsburg

¹⁷ [Ernst Ludwig von Gerlach], "Der Rationalismus auf der Universität Halle," *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung*, no. 5 (1830): 38–40, and no. 6 (1830): 45–47.

¹⁸ *KGA* I/10, lxxxviii–cxii, esp. lxxxviii–lxxxix.

¹⁹ Quotation from von Gerlach's article ("Der Rationalismus"), in *KGA* I/10, xc.

²⁰ Repr. in *KGA* I/10, 486–503; see esp. xcii.

²¹ This theme is developed further in the second sermon in the series that Schleiermacher preached on the Augsburg Confession in the summer and fall of 1830: "On the Handing Over of the Confession as Giving an Account of the Ground for Hope," in *Reformed but Ever Reforming: Sermons in Relation to the Celebration of the Handing Over of the Augsburg Confession* (1830), trans. Iain G. Nicol, Schleiermacher: Studies and Translations, vol. 8 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1997), 35–46; Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Sämmtliche Werke* (SW), Zweite Abtheilung, Band 2, *Predigten* (Berlin: Reimer, 1834), 626–36. Interestingly, in this sermon series Schleiermacher does not cite the Augsburg Confession's formulations at all but rather takes

Confession are the "testimonies directed against the abuses and errors of the Roman Catholic Church" and the "expressed resolve to want to accept instruction and refutation only from scripture" (Nicol 221, KGA I/10, 401). Schleiermacher again criticizes, as he had thirteen years earlier, the very notion of making the Protestant confessions obligatory for either professors or clergy. Finally, he disagrees with von Coelln's and Schulz's hope that in the future a new confession could be composed. Such a confession could serve no positive purpose; it could only constrain and lead to narrowness (Nicol 245–46, 248, KGA I/10, 422–24). Instead, Schleiermacher presents the vision of an open, undogmatic church characterized by free discussion: "everything will be tolerated—and everything will be disputed" (Nicol 249, KGA I/10, 245).²²

Schleiermacher will not countenance the binding authority of the sixteenth-century confessions. The 1830 text is more reserved about the enduring value of the confessions than the earlier one, which in addition to its proposed formula of allegiance to the confessions also included a plea that the symbolic books "should . . . be put back in the hands of the people and in an appropriate way made the subject of public instruction" (Nicol 188–89, KGA I/10, 142–43). Instead, the 1830 essay concedes his interlocutors' critical conclusion: "You pursue the point that the Augsburg Confession no longer corresponds with the convictions that prevail in our church. I would wish to maintain the same" (Nicol 245, KGA I/10, 422). Schleiermacher went even further in a sermon: "There are in our Augsburg Confession certain imperfections, and because of them I did not really want us to accept and endorse it anew, as our own confession."²³ Schleiermacher's growing

up various issues that it treats and discusses them by reflecting on the appropriate New Testament texts. Schleiermacher's practice, of course, is rooted in his theory of preaching, which is always exposition of the Word; but it is clear from the sermons that he sits lightly to the confession's formulations. By contrast, Claus Harms cited the Augsburg Confession directly and approvingly in his sermon, "Was die Augsburgische Konfession sei?" in Harms, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, 2:327–38.

²² Ohst (*Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 166) speaks in this context of Schleiermacher's "revolutionary . . . vision of a Protestantism factually free of dogmas."

²³ "The Wrath of God," the ninth sermon from the 1830 series on the Augsburg Confession, in *Servant of the Word: Selected Sermons of Friedrich Schleiermacher*, trans. Dawn DeVries (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 152; SW II/2, 726. See also the first sermon in the series, "Admonition Concerning Self-Induced Servitude," with its warning, "Only if we approach this festival in the knowledge of our total freedom from the letter . . . will we be able to reckon into this celebration to our blessing"; Nicol, *Reformed but Ever Reforming*, 22; SW II/2, 614. Ohst (*Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 170) helpfully differentiates Schleiermacher's stance from that of von Coelln and Schulz: Schleiermacher "can, without effacing or minimizing their difference, point to a higher unity that connects the Reformation and New Protestantism, such that the latter is able to acknowledge in the Augsburg Confession its 'birth certificate,'

reserve about the enduring significance of the Old Protestant confessions, if such it was, and his greater stress on freedom are to be explained by the shift in context. The Old Protestant confessions had become standards around which the conservatives were rallying, and the freedom of academic theology was under attack. But if it is true that in 1830 Schleiermacher was more concerned about the confessionalist threat from the right than he was about the rationalist threat from the left,²⁴ the question remains: how could Schleiermacher's view of the "proper value" of the symbolic books be put into dogmatic practice? For he has, on the one hand, denied their binding authority but, on the other hand, affirmed their significance as statements of that which is distinctively Protestant.

II. METHOD

It is against this background that §27 of *The Christian Faith*, which states the methodological principles guiding Schleiermacher's use of the Protestant confessions in his dogmatics, must be interpreted: "All propositions which claim a place in an epitome of Evangelical (Protestant) doctrine must approve themselves [*sich bewähren*] both by appeal to the Evangelical confessional documents, or in default of these, to the New Testament Scriptures, and by exhibiting their homogeneity with other propositions already recognized" (CF 112). It is the first of these two norms that is of interest here. The ensuing explanations in §27.1–§27.2 cash out this proposition in terms of three principles.

First, the distinctively Protestant content of a dogmatic proposition is proven by reference to the Protestant confessions.²⁵ This principle is fully consistent with the stance Schleiermacher had taken in the controversies of the preceding decades. The confessions are norms of what is distinctively Protestant. The reason for this status is briefly indicated: dogmatics sets "forth doctrine prevalent in the Church" and the confessions "are plainly the first common possession of Protestantism" (§27.1, CF 113). More so than the writings of a singular great man or theological genius such as Luther or Calvin, they are evidence of the

whereas von Cölln and Schulz can only conceive of the relation of Old and New Protestantism entirely undialectically, as emancipatory rejection."

²⁴ Ohst dates Schleiermacher's increasing concern about "repristinizing tendencies" from 1817. See his helpful discussion (*Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 144–52).

²⁵ The warrant for saying "is proven" hinges on the term *sich bewähren*. This term has a semantic range that extends from "to prove of value," "to prove effective," and "to stand the test," to "to prove itself" and "to hold good." See the online dictionary Leo (<http://dict.leo.org>); and *Oxford Harrap Standard German-English Dictionary*, ed. Trevor Jones (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 1:78.

common spirit or essence of Protestantism.²⁶ Of course, there is an apparent anomaly, of which Schleiermacher is well aware: one of the foundational principles of the Reformation was that scripture alone is normative. Is giving priority to the confessions a Catholicizing inconsistency? But the anomaly, Schleiermacher argues, is only apparent. References to the scriptures can only establish a dogmatic proposition to be Christian, not Protestant. Thus, reference to the confessions plays a necessary, but limited, role and is not in any way a degradation of the authority of scripture. Moreover, since the confessions warrant their claims by appeal to the scriptures, an appeal to the confessions is an indirect appeal to scripture. In §27.4 Schleiermacher takes up the danger that a “symbolical dogmatic” (i.e., a dogmatics constructed around the symbolic books) might approximate Roman Catholic procedures. Does tradition (in the form of official Church pronouncements) have binding authority in Protestant dogmatics, as the Magisterium does in Catholic? Schleiermacher introduces two safeguards: scriptural exegesis is not “subject to authority” (by implication: not even the authority of the confessions), and dogmatics “does not . . . ascribe to its own propositions a value independent of their expressing the inner experience of each individual” (CF 117). The basic method of the *Glaubenslehre* as giving an account “of the Christian religious affections” (§15) prevents the introduction of the authority of past official pronouncements into contemporary dogmatics. There is no Protestant Magisterium.

The second principle is that Lutheran and Reformed confessions are “of equal right”; “only that part of the confessional documents in which they all agree can be really essential to Protestantism” (§27.2, CF 114). This methodological principle coheres with Schleiermacher’s intention, as he expressed it in the preface to the first edition of the *Glaubenslehre*, “to present the essence of the evangelical view of faith and life in its particular boundaries as the same in both confessions.”²⁷ The *Glaubenslehre* was conceived as a dogmatics for the united Protestant Prussian Church; the methodological expression of this intention was his procedure, as he explained in the preface to the second edition, of giving “a free and conciliatory treatment of the relevant documents.”²⁸ In practice, Schleiermacher marshals quotations from both Lutheran and Reformed confessions, almost always including (where they address the issue under discussion) the Augsburg Confession and the Second

²⁶ Nicol 181–82, KGA I/10, 136–37; see also Ohst’s discussion of this point (*Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 70–78, 105–6, 112–13).

²⁷ KGA I/7/1, 6.

²⁸ CF viii; KGA I/13/1, 4–5.

Helvetic Confession as the most representative Lutheran and Reformed confessions.²⁹

The third principle is that “all our symbols, though some more than others, are merely occasional documents” (§27.2). This principle has far-reaching implications, for it amounts to a virtual admission that the documents are historically relative. Schleiermacher names two specific implications. First, the formulations of the confessions are relative to time and place and, thus, are subject to improvement. As he states in another context, “no definition of doctrine . . . can be regarded as irreformable and valid for all time” (§154.2, *CF* 690).³⁰ Second, the documents are subject to both interpretation and criticism. The confessions both “too precipitately” rejected positions then thought to be heretical and too uncritically took over earlier views without testing them against the Protestant spirit: “we can no longer approve its [i.e., “the incipient Evangelical Church’s”] having none the less accepted all the ecumenical creeds” (§27.2, *CF* 114; §154.2, *CF* 690). From this third principle Schleiermacher concludes: “In going back to the symbols, if we are to avoid making that procedure a hindrance to the further development of doctrine, we must, in the first place, rather have regard to the spirit than cling to the letter, and, in the second place, we must apply the exegetical art to the letter itself, in order to make right use of it” (§27.2, *CF* 114–15).

The principle of historical relativity means that the confessional documents have at best a qualified authority. While they are important evidence for the distinctively Protestant form of belief, they are subject to both interpretation and dogmatic criticism. Doctrinal development must not be held hostage to the past. Martin Ohst insightfully connects this qualified authority of the confessions with Schleiermacher’s doctrine of the fallibility of the visible church (§§153–54).³¹ “Each particular Church may err even in its official presentations of the truth” (§154.1, *CF* 689). Historical relativity and the fallibility of the visible church mean that the Protestant confessions cannot be normative in any absolute, unqualified sense; they are in principle fallible and incomplete and are open to correction, criticism, and further development.

²⁹ Ohst (*Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 111, 135) argues that the Augsburg Confession has, for Schleiermacher, the status of the archetypal Protestant confession.

³⁰ As Schleiermacher noted in the open letter to Coelln and Schulz, Melancthon himself was not satisfied with the Augsburg Confession, but kept tinkering with it, producing eventually the Saxon Confession. See Nicol 220 (text and n. 5), *KGA* I/10, 400.

³¹ See Ohst, *Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 218–24. Ohst’s evidence comes from §§170–71 of the first edition.

In the midst of his discussion of Christology, Schleiermacher makes an especially revealing remark about the “critical process”:

The task of the critical process is to hold ecclesiastical formulae to strict agreement with the foregoing analysis of our Christian self-consciousness, in order, partly, to judge how far they agree with it at least in essentials, partly (with regard to individual points), to inquire how much of the current form of expression is to be retained, and how much, on the other hand, had better be given up, either because it is an imperfect solution of the problem or because it is an addition not in itself essential, and harmful because the occasion of persistent misunderstandings. (§95.2, *CF* 390)

This methodologically crucial sentence reveals Schleiermacher’s determination to subject even time-honored “ecclesiastical formulae” to critical analysis. The Christian self-consciousness itself is authoritative, and the confessions are to be tested against it. So far from being unconditioned norms, aspects of the confessions may be jettisoned if they are problematic for the various reasons mentioned in the passage.

III. PRACTICE

To analyze Schleiermacher’s practice in employing the Protestant confessions in his *Glaubenslehre*, it makes most sense to turn to part 2, for it is the theological heart of his systematic theology and it parallels closely the structure of classical Protestantism as exhibited in its confessions. Part 2 begins with an analysis of the consciousness of sin and then moves on to the consciousness of grace, treating Christology first and then regeneration and sanctification. In this structure, Schleiermacher’s *Glaubenslehre* reveals its general affinity to the structure of many Protestant confessions. The Augsburg Confession moves from article 2, on original sin, to articles 3 on Christology and 4 on justification. The structure of the Second Helvetic Confession is more complex, but one can still recognize a similar movement, from the fall and original sin (article 8) to Christology (article 11) on to repentance, conversion, and justification (articles 14–15). In what follows I will focus exclusively on the propositions of the first form (“descriptions of human states,” §30). My leading questions are both methodological (What, in practice, is the systematic function of the confessions? In what sense are they normative?) and material (How much continuity does Schleiermacher’s theology exhibit with the theology of the Reformation era? Where is Schleiermacher being innovative?). My argument is that Schleiermacher’s actual practice shows considerable differentiation with respect to both the methodological and the material issues. Throughout, Schleiermacher is engaged in the “critical proce-

ture" outlined above, and his theological positions exhibit both continuity and change in relation to the confessions.

A. Sin

Where the quotations from the confessions actually appear in the course of any particular discussion in the *Glaubenslehre* is significant. The discussion of the consciousness of sin has a distinctive structure; §§66–69, which are labeled "Introduction" on the title page (*KGA* I/13/1, 6), develop a definition of the consciousness of sin and a theory of sin without any references to the confessions. Propositions 70–72 and §§73–74, which are labeled, respectively, "First Doctrine: Original Sin" and "Second Doctrine: Actual Sin," include blocks of quotations from the confessions under three of the four propositions and numerous quotations from them in footnotes throughout. A hermeneutical clue to this structure is offered in the postscript following §99; there Schleiermacher remarks that his presentation of Christology was given "first in our own quite independent form of expression" (by which he must mean §§93–94) and "then in closer connection with the accepted forms of the Church" (by which he must mean §§96–98). Although this twofold structure is not followed in the discussion of every doctrine in the *Glaubenslehre*, it is followed in some, including the doctrine of sin. There are no quotations or allusions to the confessions in §§66–69, for here Schleiermacher is developing an analysis of the Christian self-consciousness in his own "independent form of expression"; that is, he is giving his own revisionist account of sin.³² The confessions appear in the sections labeled "doctrine" (§§70–74), because here Schleiermacher is presenting his analysis "in closer connection with the accepted forms of the Church"; that is, he is entering into dialogue with the Protestant tradition.

1. *Original sin: the coherence of revisionist theory with traditional doctrine* (§§66–69, §70).—Schleiermacher's revisionist account of sin begins with a theological definition or phenomenological characterization of the consciousness of sin (§66). In §67 he presents a developmental account of the origin of sin: sin arises in human experience because the sensible self-consciousness gains the upper hand over the higher self-consciousness in the course of human development. In a second step, Schleiermacher presents an account in terms of the inequality of insight and willpower (§68), and in a final step he sketches out a social

³² There is one passing reference to a phrase from the Augsburg Confession (§66.2), but it is not germane to my argument.

account (§69). Without using the term “original sin” or deriving sin from the fall, Schleiermacher shows why the consciousness of sin inevitably arises.

Only with §70 does Schleiermacher introduce a block of quotations from the confessions.³³ What is the function of this block of citations—what role does it play in the argument? Proposition 70 states: “The sinfulness that is present in an individual prior to any action of his own, and has its ground outside his own being, is in every case a complete incapacity for good, which can be removed only by the influence of redemption” (CF 282). The main point is succinctly stated in the first sentence of §70.1: “this idea of a sinfulness present from the first in every human being is in perfect accord with what has been set forth above.” Schleiermacher’s revisionist account of original sin (§§66–69) is consistent with the traditional doctrine of original sin as set forth in the confessions and summarized in §70.³⁴ Although Schleiermacher and the Protestant confessions are in agreement that there is original sin, their accounts differ radically: Schleiermacher offers a revisionist theory for the universality of sin.

2. *Complete incapacity for good: a complicated relationship to the confessions* (§70).—What does the “complete incapacity for good” that §70 affirms actually mean? Tracking the footnotes in §70.2 reveals a more complicated relationship to the confessions than just discussed. Several times Schleiermacher quotes the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, a text that was written in an attempt to put to rest the doctrinal controversies that raged among Lutheran theologians after the death of Luther. The reader is suddenly plunged into the Synergistic Controversy: can human beings “co-operate” with grace? Can they “appropriate” grace? How far should “complete incapacity for good” be taken? “We must not magnify our congenital sinfulness to such an extent as

³³ Here are two representative examples (CF 282): “They teach that . . . all human beings who are propagated according to nature are born without fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence. And they teach that this disease or original fault is truly sin, which even now damns and brings eternal death to those who are not born again through baptism and the holy spirit.” (Augsburg Confession II, K&W 37, 39). “By sin we understand that innate corruption of man . . . by which we, immersed in perverse desires [*concupiscentiis*] . . . are unable to do or even to think anything good of ourselves” (Second Helvetic Confession VIII, Cochrane 235).

³⁴ Thus I am in substantial agreement with Ohst’s similar conclusion based on his analysis of the first edition; see *Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 224–45, esp. 229. However, I cannot agree with Ohst’s claim that Schleiermacher’s independent analysis of the consciousness of sin is developed by the “philosophy of religion” (231, 244). Such a characterization misconstrues, I believe, the method of Schleiermacher’s theology of consciousness. A discussion of my reasons for disagreeing with Ohst is not possible here, but see my sorting out of the methodological issues in my article “Schleiermacher’s Theology,” in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. Erwin Fahlbusch et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 4:179–89.

would involve the denial of man's capacity to appropriate redemption" (CF 283), Schleiermacher argues, and he cites with apparent disapproval the Solid Declaration (II:7): "In this human nature, after the Fall and before rebirth, there is not a spark of spiritual power left or present with which human beings can prepare themselves for the grace of God or accept grace as it is offered" (K&W 544, cited in CF 283 n. 4). Did the Solid Declaration get it wrong? Schleiermacher does not actually come out and say so, for the footnote continues with the observation, "this is canceled (so far at least as it conflicts with our statement) by what follows," and a quotation from the Solid Declaration (II: 53): "A person who has not yet been converted to God and been reborn can hear and read his Word externally, for in such external matters . . . people have a free will to a certain extent even after the fall, so that they may go to church and listen or not listen to the sermon" (K&W 554). Here we have a more complicated relation to a confession; Schleiermacher quotes the Solid Declaration against itself, as denying synergism and as yet allowing some free will relevant to the appropriation of salvation. Schleiermacher does not embrace synergism (the human role "is, strictly, not a co-operation at all"), but he thinks that "the capacity to appropriate the grace that is offered to us" is indispensable, and he proposes it be thought of as "a yielding of self to the operation of grace" (§70.2, CF 284). Thus, he cites disapprovingly one of the Solid Declaration's most extreme antisynergistic statements (I: 23): "We reject . . . those who teach that . . . there is nevertheless something good left from our natural birth, such as the capacity, aptitude, competence or capacity to begin doing something, or to effect something, or to cooperate in spiritual matters" (K&W 535, cited in CF 284 n. 1). Schleiermacher's relation to the Solid Declaration is complex: he does not embrace what it opposes, namely, synergism, but he is critical of its formulations. But the discussion in §70.2 is not the last of this issue; Schleiermacher returns to it in the discussion of §108.³⁵

3. *Guilt for original sin: the confessions as problematic yet affirmable* (§71).—Paragraph 71.1 broaches a new problem with the tradition: "In not a few of these symbolical passages [the ones cited under §71, CF 285–86] . . . the doctrine of original sin appears to imply that the sinfulness innate in all men, just in so far as received from an external

³⁵ Ohst on the basis of his analysis of §91.2 of the first edition boldly concludes that Schleiermacher contradicts the Formula of Concord (*Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 233). Schleiermacher heavily revised this whole discussion in §70.2 of the second edition, and his disagreement with the Formula of Concord, though real, is qualified in the ways I have indicated. Although one may suspect that Schleiermacher is pulling his punches out of concern for Lutheran sensibilities, a more likely explanation is that his revisionism is always qualified by an innate conservatism.

source, is yet in every case the individual's own guilt." Thus, for example, the Augsburg Confession asserts that "this same innate disease and original sin is truly sin and condemns to God's eternal wrath all who are not born anew" (K&W 38, cited in *CF* 285). Even more extremely, the Gallican Confession states: "We believe, also, that this evil is truly sin, sufficient for the condemnation of the whole human race, even of little children in the mother's womb" (Cochrane 148). Schleiermacher is blunt in his condemnation: these implications of the doctrine of original sin are "incredible," "repellent," and "offensive" (§71.1, *CF* 286). Moreover, the very notion of punishment for original sin is dangerous to piety (§71.4). It would seem that the notion is so problematic that despite its presence in the Confessions it must be rejected.

Yet Schleiermacher's discussion of this point is quite subtle and ends up affirming the language. "The doctrine . . . is given this incredible turn and acquires its repellent and offensive tone only when, alike against the nature of things and in opposition to a true and generally recognized principle, original sin is divorced from actual sin" (*CF* 286). The root of the problem is that the original sin/actual sin distinction is deeply flawed; Schleiermacher works out an alternative that hinges on tying the two together. "This later sinfulness which has issued from the individual's own action is one and the same with that which was congenital in origin" (§71.1, *CF* 287). Protestant thought at its best, he claims, recognized this state of affairs. Thus he concludes his discussion with the claim concerning "the confessional passages that refer to children" that "we can altogether adopt them as our own" (*CF* 287).

But how can Schleiermacher adopt the confessional formulas as his own? Surely he does not accept the literal guilt of fetuses in the womb? Has he not just given good reasons for finding the confessions objectionable? The answer to all of these questions is that he can retain the confessional language by attributing to it the meaning of his revisionist theory: children are not always already guilty by virtue of an inherited original sin, but "they will be sinners because of what is already within them" (*CF* 287). Taken literally, the notion of infantile guilt for original sin is objectionable; understood properly, that is, in terms of a revisionist account of original and actual sin, the confessional language is affirmable. Moreover, the tradition at its best (Melanchthon) understood this.³⁶

³⁶ Ohst maintains that the corresponding passage in the first edition amounts to "a rejection of what they [the confessions] assert" (*Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 283 n. 167). Schleiermacher is bending over backward to retain language whose literal meaning he has

4. *The fall: theology of consciousness trumps the confessions* (§72).—The Protestant confessions trace original sin to the fall of Adam. For example, the Augsburg Confession, article 2, states that “since the Fall of Adam all human beings who are propagated according to nature are born with sin” (K&W 37), whereas the Belgic Confession, article 15, states that “through the disobedience of Adam sin is extended to all mankind; which is a corruption of the whole nature, and an hereditary disease” (Cochrane 199). Interestingly, and perhaps significantly, Schleiermacher gives the relevant references but does not quote the language. Rather, he claims that “no special importance is attached to this point in our symbolical books” (§72.1, *CF* 292). Schleiermacher’s own position, as summarized in §72, is that “we have no reason for explaining universal sinfulness as due to an alteration in human nature” brought about by the fall of the first pair. In the course of the discussion of his thesis, he puts forward some devastating criticisms of the doctrine of the fall, arguing that it is incoherent. Thus he concludes that “we cannot say that human nature was changed as a result of the first sin, and the statement of our symbolical books to that effect is one we must depart from” (§72.3). Here Schleiermacher pulls no punches and forthrightly concedes that the confessional statements are no longer tenable.

This initial foray into Schleiermacher’s use of the Protestant confessions in his dogmatics has uncovered a differentiated relationship. He develops a revisionist account of original sinfulness and takes pains to show that his revisionist account is consistent with the doctrine of original sin. He finds the notion of a complete incapacity for the good to lead into troubled waters and is less than enthusiastic about the strong antisnergistic statements of the Formula of Concord. At times he is accommodating to confessional language that he finds problematic, as in the case of children and sin. On two points, the penal desert of original sin and the fall of the first pair, he finds himself in disagreement with assertions in the confessions. In the midst of his discussion of the latter point, he makes a significant methodological statement: “It is true that our confessional books adopt the derivation in question [i.e., they derive universal sinfulness “from the first sin of our first parents”], but in such matters we are the less obliged to follow them because our consciousness of universal sinfulness as set forth above [§70],

demolished, for the confessions are wrong to assert that infants are guilty for original sin alone. But he reads them as meaning that “original sin is the sufficient ground of all actual sins” and cites Melancthon as his evidence: “And thus always with original evil there are, at the same time, actual sins” (*CF* 286 n. 1). Schleiermacher is taking in this instance a more conservative approach to the confessions than he does in some other cases.

is something inward and immediate, while that derivation of it gives a purely external account on which the inward in no way depends, and by which it cannot in any way be reinforced" (§72.4, *CF* 299). This statement in effect enunciates the principle that the theology of consciousness trumps the confessions. The consciousness of sin is a fact of the Christian consciousness, and the explanation of its universality in no way depends upon the dubious hypothesis of a historical fall of the ancestors of the race. The mere presence of such a theory in the confessional documents does not obligate contemporary Protestants to believe it or dogmaticians to include it in their systems.

B. Christ

The structure of Schleiermacher's discussion of the person and work of Christ is parallel to the structure of his doctrine of sin. Propositions 93–94 present Schleiermacher's revisionist doctrine of the person of Christ, without any reference to the confessions, whereas §§96–98 cite the Protestant confessions (and other historical sources) and conduct a critical discussion with the traditional two-natures doctrine. Similarly, §§100–101 present Schleiermacher's revisionist theory of the work of Christ, while §§102–5 conduct a dialogue with the tradition (in the form of the doctrine of the prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices of Christ).

1. *The two-natures doctrine: agreement with the intention, not the formula* (§94, §§96–97).—Proposition 94 gives Schleiermacher's revisionist formula for the doctrine of the person of Christ: "The Redeemer . . . is like all other men in virtue of the identity of human nature, but distinguished from them all by the constant potency of His God-consciousness, which was a veritable existence of God in Him." This doctrine is worked out in terms of Schleiermacher's analysis of the Christian consciousness of grace and avoids the language of two natures. Proposition 96 turns to the traditional two-natures doctrine ("In Jesus Christ divine nature and human nature were combined into one person"). At the beginning of the discussion (*CF* 391), Schleiermacher quotes Lutheran, Anglican, and Reformed confessions; we may take the *Gallican Confession* as representative: "We believe that in one person, that is, Jesus Christ, the two natures are actually and inseparably joined and united" (Cochrane 149).

The doctrine of the person of Christ was not at issue between Protestants and Catholics in the Reformation, and the Protestant confessions simply take over "the old formulae" (§96.3, *CF* 396). As he opens the discussion of the two-natures doctrine, Schleiermacher states his

agreement with the two-sided intention of the traditional language: on the one hand, "to describe Christ in such a way . . . that . . . a vital fellowship between us and Him shall be possible" and, on the other hand, to express "the existence of God in Him . . . in the clearest possible way" (§96.1, *CF* 391). Schleiermacher's own formula (§94), he claims, is fully in accord with the dual intention and thus with the meaning of the Reformation confessions. But he immediately goes on, in some of the strongest language found in the *Glaubenslehre*, to assert that "there is almost nothing in the execution of this aim against which protest must not be raised" (*CF* 391). The dogmatic formula of "two natures" is scientifically incompetent and ecclesially useless, and in the course of the succeeding pages Schleiermacher develops a series of devastating criticisms in support of this thesis.

Schleiermacher's position on the Christological language of the confessions, then, is to affirm their intentions while rejecting their formulas and substituting his own revisionist language. In light of the revisionist formula of §94 and the critical discussion in §96, §97 is on the face of it a surprising proposition: "In the uniting of the divine nature with the human, the divine alone was active or self-imparting, and the human alone passive or in process of being assumed; but during the state of union every activity was a common activity of both natures." Schleiermacher's revisionist formula gets rid of two-natures talk as unintelligible and incoherent, yet §97 sets out to solve the problem of properly relating the two natures to each other. One may be tempted to wonder why Schleiermacher does not simply declare the problem to be insoluble because it is incoherently posed. Could he not claim to have cut the Gordian knot and simply refuse to discuss the two natures of Christ? But that would be to do one's theological business wholesale, whereas Schleiermacher always does it retail: by proceeding step-by-step in careful dialogue with the tradition, critically assessing which problems have been solved, and which have not. Moreover, as already seen in the discussion of sin, Schleiermacher's theology is characterized by a relative conservatism with respect to the confessions, despite his revisionism. Thus, although he has demolished two-natures talk, Schleiermacher proceeds to wrestle with various traditional problems occasioned by it. I will focus on two issues which he takes up under §97: the virgin birth and the *communicatio idiomatum*.

2. *The virgin birth: superfluous and inadvisable* (§97.2).—The virgin birth is another feature of the early creeds that did not become a point of controversy between Catholics and Protestants and was simply taken over by the Reformation confessions. In a footnote in §97.2, Schleiermacher cites the one Lutheran, the four Reformed, and the one An-

glican creed that affirm the virgin birth (*CF* 404 n. 2). The obvious problem posed by the virgin birth is the credibility of supernaturalism, and thus Schleiermacher's treatment of it is a test case for his general approach of seeking a third alternative to rationalism and supernaturalism.

The crux of Schleiermacher's argument, however, is not to tackle the credibility of the virgin birth directly, but to show, rather, that it plays at best a marginal role in the New Testament and that nothing is at stake dogmatically in this doctrine. "It is quite possible to believe in Christ as Redeemer without believing in His supernatural conception" (§97.2, *CF* 404). What is vital, Christologically, is the perfection of Christ's God-consciousness and his unclouded blessedness, and, although "the general idea of a supernatural conception remains . . . essential and necessary," the exclusion of "male activity" has no connection to these decisive points. Here is a case, then, where the Protestant confessions have enshrined a doctrine that is both "superfluous" and "inadvisable": superfluous because it is irrelevant to the Christologically vital points and inadvisable because it leads into conflict with science (§97.2, *CF* 406). In this case, Schleiermacher is not at all conservative: he makes no attempt to retrieve the doctrine.

3. *Communicatio idiomatum*: a plague on both your (Lutheran and Reformed) houses (§97.5).—A further problem of relating the divine and human natures became a matter of dispute among Lutheran and Calvinist theologians in the sixteenth century. The doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* refers to the "theory of the mutual communication of the attributes of the two natures to one another" (§97.5, *CF* 411). The dispute was between the so-called crypto-Calvinists of Saxony, who denied it, and Martin Chemnitz and others who defended it.³⁷ The Formula of Concord in the Solid Declaration (VIII:64) tried to resolve the controversy in the formula cited by Schleiermacher (*CF* 412 n. 1): "The whole fulness of Deity dwells in Christ . . . 'bodily' as in its own body . . . in the assumed human nature . . . he exercises the same divine power . . . [and efficacy as the soul does in the body] and [as] fire in a glowing iron" (K&W 628).³⁸ Schleiermacher goes into some detail pointing out the conceptual difficulties with this solution. Having disposed of the *communicatio idiomatum*, he then comments: "the rejection of this theory . . . by no means involves a preferring the Reformed school to the Lutheran." The Reformed formula (Schleiermacher cites

³⁷ Reinhold Seeberg, *Textbook of the History of Doctrines*, trans. Charles E. Hay, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1966), 2:374–75.

³⁸ The words in the first brackets were dropped by Schleiermacher from his quotation from the Latin but have been retained for clarity; "as" has been added to the translation for clarity.

the *French Confession* XV: "the two natures are actually and inseparably joined and united, and yet each remains in its proper character" [Cochrane 149]) is no better. Evenhandedly, Schleiermacher develops a concise criticism of it as well. So while the *communicatio idiomatum* is to be "banished from the system of doctrine, and handed over to the history of doctrine" to languish in well-deserved obscurity, both the Lutheran and Reformed doctrines "are equally to be rejected, since they both depend upon the false idea of a divine nature to which it is possible to ascribe a group of attributes" (§97.5, *CF* 411, 413). At the end of the discussion of §97, Schleiermacher has shown his evenhandedness with respect to both Lutheran and Reformed confessions and demonstrated his critical freedom with respect to the confessional documents. This analysis serves to clarify the status of §97. On the face of it, the proposition is anomalous: its language of "two natures" is, on Schleiermacher's own account, objectionable. The best way to understand the anomaly is to see §97 not as a statement of Schleiermacher's own constructive, doctrinal position; that is found in §94. Rather, it formulates the traditional doctrine and is the occasion for a critical conversation with difficulties in the tradition.

4. *Imputed righteousness and Christ's death as satisfaction for sin: formulas capable of being reinterpreted* (§104).—Schleiermacher sets out two revisionist formulas for the work of Christ: "The Redeemer assumes believers into the power of His God-consciousness, and this is his redemptive activity" (§100); "The Redeemer assumes the believers into the fellowship of His unclouded blessedness, and this is His reconciling activity" (§101). The notion of imputed righteousness does not appear in these revisionist formulas, nor does Christ's death on the cross. But when Schleiermacher turns to the language of the Church in §§103–5, both formulas reappear. In fact, references to the confessions are rather sparse in this section. My discussion will focus on two revealing test cases of Schleiermacher's relation to Old Protestant orthodoxy in §104 on the priestly office, namely, imputed righteousness and Christ's atoning death.

Luther thought of redemption in terms of the imputation of Christ's righteousness: through faith, the righteousness of Christ becomes the believer's own. On this topic Schleiermacher cites only two confessions, one Lutheran and one Reformed.³⁹ Schleiermacher's interpretation of

³⁹ See *CF* 455 n. 1: "His obedience consists . . . in the fact that he put himself in our place under the law and fulfilled the law with this obedience and reckoned it to us as righteousness" (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration III:15, K&W 564). "But Jesus Christ, imputing to us all his merits and so many holy works, which he hath done for us and in our stead, is our righteousness" (Belgic Confession XXII, Cochrane, 204).

the meaning of this conception is consistent with a (perhaps *the*) major theme of his theology, that living communion with Christ means that Christ lives in the believer: "Because of His life in us, the impulse to the fulfilling of [the Divine] will is also active in us, so that in this connection with Him we too are objects of the divine good pleasure. This is the meaning . . . of the often misunderstood expression, that Christ's obedience is our righteousness, or that His righteousness is imputed to us" (§104.3, *CF* 455). Rather than some kind of odd book-keeping relationship, where the positive entries in Christ's ledger are transferred to the believer's account, Schleiermacher is thinking of the active transformation of the believer's life: as a consequence of the assumption of the believer into a living communion with Christ, "His motive principle becomes ours also" (§104.3, *CF* 457). Schleiermacher has preserved and affirmed the term "imputed righteousness" but has given it new meaning.

Schleiermacher's discussion of the death of Christ is complex and many-sided. I will focus on one strand: the idea that Christ's death "satisfied the divine justice." In a footnote to his discussion, Schleiermacher quotes three Reformed confessions and Luther's Large Catechism.⁴⁰ What does Schleiermacher do with these ideas?

First, he affirms the idea that Christ's suffering was suffering for others. To defend this notion, he has recourse to an idea developed earlier in the *Glaubenslehre*: that evil (*Übel*, i.e., misfortune, suffering, etc.) is properly understood as punishment for sin (§76). He then goes on to explain that "each individual does not wholly and exclusively suffer precisely the evil which is connected with his personal sin. Therefore it can be said, in every case in which anyone suffers evil not connected with his own sin, that he suffers punishment for others" (§104.4, *CF* 457). Just as under certain circumstances we all suffer the punishment of sin for each other, so Christ suffers for all.

Second, he affirms the idea that through the suffering of Christ punishment is abolished. Why and how? "Through the suffering of Christ punishment is abolished, because in the fellowship of His blessed life even the evil which is in the process of disappearing is no longer at least regarded as punishment" (§104.4, *CF* 458). That is, the consciousness of the Christian is transformed. The idea, we might say, is not forensic (Christ suffers the death penalty for sinners) but psychological: in the living communion with Christ the believer no longer expe-

⁴⁰ Here are two representative quotations (from *CF* 458 n. 3): "He suffered in body and soul to make full atonement for the sins of His people, etc." (Scottish Confession IX, Cochrane 170). "He suffered, died and was buried so that he might make satisfaction for me and pay what I owed" (Luther's Large Catechism II:31, K&W 434).

riences those evils which he or she suffers as punishment for sin. This is "the real meaning," Schleiermacher informs us, "of the statements that Christ by His willing surrender of Himself to suffering and death satisfied the divine justice, as that which had ordained the connection between sin and evil, and thus set us free from the punishment of sin" (§104.4, *CF* 458). Schleiermacher has taken great pains to show that some old formulas, if properly interpreted, can still be affirmed as consistent with his revisionist understanding.

C. Regeneration and Sanctification

Schleiermacher's procedure by which the Protestant confessions are incorporated in the discussion of doctrines does not remain uniform throughout the *Glaubenslehre*. The pattern that I have tracked in the sections on sin and Christ, where Schleiermacher's revisionist views are put first, in introductory propositions with no citations from the confessions, followed by sections replete with citations from and discussions of the confessions, does not persist in the Second Division of the First Section. Rather, here Schleiermacher simply launches into the doctrines in question, with the confessions introduced at the outset. I think that there are two reasons for this shift in procedure. First, in the former case, Schleiermacher is more strongly revisionist: he is proposing Sin without a historical fall, Christ without two natures, and a psychological rather than a forensic understanding of Christ's suffering and death. In the latter sections, although Schleiermacher is to be sure revising the tradition, his revisions are not as startling and remain closer to the confessions. Second, and more important, with the section on regeneration Schleiermacher takes up the topics that were the subject of disputes between Catholics and Protestants. Thus here the confessions come into their own as evidence of the distinctively Protestant religious experiences and beliefs, and the Protestant-Catholic contrast plays an explicit role. For these two reasons, I surmise, Schleiermacher has changed his procedure.

1. *Conversion: the distinctively Protestant view* (§108).—If Christ redeems by "assum[ing] believers into the power of His God-consciousness" (§100), the question arises as to how that redemption takes place in the life of the believer. Part of the answer to that question is "through regeneration" (§106), which is analyzed as conversion and justification (§107). Schleiermacher understands conversion as follows: "Conversion, the beginning of the new life in fellowship with Christ, makes itself known in each individual by Repentance, which consists of a combination of regret and change of heart; and by Faith, which consists in

the appropriation of the perfection and blessedness of Christ" (§108). Schleiermacher's proposition is immediately followed by a block of citations from the Protestant confessions.⁴¹ Schleiermacher immediately concedes that "the definition found in these citations from the confessional literature certainly does not appear to tally with that given formally here," namely, in §108 (§108.1, M&S 481). Yet after some analysis, he concludes that "the general result is identical." His point is that, making allowances for shifting terminology, Schleiermacher is in agreement with the Protestant confessions on the phenomenology of grace, that is, on the shape of the religious experience of the Protestant Christian. Conversion marks the transformation from the old life in the corporate life of sinfulness to the new life in the corporate life of grace, in the living fellowship with the Redeemer.

That this is a distinctively Protestant view of conversion (as consisting of repentance and faith) is explicitly brought out at the end of §108.1: "The Roman Church," Schleiermacher points out, "does not count faith as an element in conversion, but puts in its stead confession and satisfaction." Moreover, the Catholics understand faith and its role differently: faith, understood as "divinely imparted and humanly accepted knowledge . . . precedes repentance and conversion" (§198.1, *CF* 483). To buttress his interpretation of the Catholic-Protestant differences, Schleiermacher cites by way of contrast two portions of the Roman Catechism (*CF* 483 n. 2).⁴² Schleiermacher, of course, does not accept the Catholic view (he disagrees with the Catholic understanding of faith and its role and maintains that "confession, rightly understood, is included in regret, and . . . satisfaction is a sheer impossibility"; *CF* 483). It is not necessary to analyze further the Protestant-Catholic controversies of the sixteenth century in order to understand the function of the confessions at this point in his argument: Schleiermacher is analyzing the characteristically Protestant view of regeneration for which the con-

⁴¹ We may take two citations as representative (*CF* 481): "Properly speaking, repentance consists of two parts: one is contrition or the terrors that strike the conscience when sin is recognized; the other is faith" (Augsburg Confession XII, K&W 45). "By repentance [*poenitentiam*] we understand (1) the recovering of a right mind of sinful man awakened by the Word of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit, and received by true faith, by which the sinner immediately acknowledges his innate corruption and all his sins . . . (2) grieves for them in his heart, and not only bewails and frankly confesses them before God with a feeling of shame, but also (3) with indignation abominates them; and (4) now zealously considers the amendment of his ways" (Second Helvetic Confession XIV, Cochrane 251).

⁴² "For as the end proposed to man as his ultimate happiness is far above the reach of human understanding, it was therefore necessary that it should be made known to him by God. This knowledge, however, is nothing else than faith" (*Catechism of the Council of Trent*, 11). "Penance, however, in those who repent, must be preceded by faith, for without faith no man can turn to God. Faith, therefore, cannot on any account be called a part of penance" (*Catechism of the Council of Trent*, 263).

fessions are evidence and is sorting out the points of difference between Protestant and Catholic views. This section of the *Glaubenslehre* illustrates the methodological principle that the Protestant confessions are norms of distinctively Protestant theology.

2. *The synergism debate revisited: partial agreement with the Formula of Concord* (§108.6).—Can the regenerate person freely and willingly cooperate with divine grace in the process of regeneration? Schleiermacher had already touched on this issue in exploring the meaning of “complete incapacity for good” in the doctrine of sin; he returns to it in his discussion of “the state of the subject . . . during conversion” (§108.6). Schleiermacher distinguishes two questions. The first is, “How is the ordinary natural action of the subject . . . related to the work of Christ which produces change of heart and faith?” Schleiermacher cites the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord to support the point that “all that preparatory grace has brought to pass within him of course cooperates” (*CF* 493 n. 1).⁴³ He then cites in the very next note the Solid Declaration (II:53) in support of his claim that “the capacity of apprehension must . . . be allowed to exist in his natural condition.” “For in such external matters . . . people have a free will to a certain extent even after the fall, so that they may . . . listen or not listen to the sermon [*verbum Dei*]” (*K&W* 554).⁴⁴

This would appear to be a step in the direction of synergism, but by making the further claim that “we cannot concede man’s natural cooperation” with the Word, Schleiermacher is making clear that he is not really a friend of synergism; “even consent accompanying the reception of the Divine Word . . . can only be ascribed to the antecedent work of grace” (*CF* 494). Thus far, then, Schleiermacher is in agreement with the Formula of Concord’s antisynnergistic language.

But there is a second problem: “How is the presupposed passive condition during conversion related to the spontaneous activity which ensues in fellowship with Christ?” (*CF* 493). Schleiermacher’s answer is that “spontaneous activity in living fellowship with Christ begins the moment of being received into His fellowship” (*CF* 494). Tracing this element backward to its beginnings, Schleiermacher finds it rooted in “the desire for fellowship with God.” This desire is the famous “point

⁴³ “It follows from this, as has been said, that as soon as the Holy Spirit has begun his work of rebirth and renewal in us through the Word and holy sacraments, it is certain that on the basis of his power we can and should be cooperating with him, though still in great weakness. This occurs not on the basis of our fleshly, natural powers but on the basis of the new powers and gifts which the Holy Spirit initiated in us in conversion” (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration II:65, *K&W* 556).

⁴⁴ This is the same passage already cited (*CF* 283) in Schleiermacher’s discussion of the “complete incapacity for good” in §70.

of attachment (*Anknüpfungspunkt*) for every operation of divine grace" (CF 495). This is not "pure passivity" but rather part of the original perfection of human nature. "The only thing we are ruling out," Schleiermacher points out, "is a passivity that would be entirely foreign to human nature, in virtue of which a person would resemble a lifeless object in the matter of conversion." In connection with this latter point, he quotes the Solid Declaration again (CF 495 n. 1), but disapprovingly: "Before people are . . . reborn of the Holy Spirit . . . they cannot in and of themselves . . . accomplish anything [*cooperari potest*] . . . for their own conversion, any more than a stone or a block of wood or a piece of clay" (K&W 548–49). Schleiermacher finds this language inappropriate: human beings before conversion are not just blocks of wood or lumps of clay—inanimate objects lacking in subjectivity. Rather, there is an *Anknüpfungspunkt*, a residuum of the original perfection of human nature.⁴⁵

Schleiermacher is not jumping into the synergistic camp: in §108.6 he largely agrees with the Solid Declaration's antisynergistic assertions. But he does think that the document goes too far in II/24 with its analogies to a stone, a block of wood, and a lump of clay. In its zeal to put down synergism, the Solid Declaration dehumanizes human beings, reducing them to objects of grace deprived of subjectivity. Schleiermacher has once again worked his way through the Old Protestant documents, distinguishing what is acceptable from what is not.

After working through the complex train of thought of §108.6, one may be wondering: is this trip necessary? Has Schleiermacher been led into the arid and rocky badlands of a tedious and irrelevant dispute by the misconceived agenda of coming to terms with an antiquated document? In his defense, one can point out how Schleiermacher generated the problem in the first place. "It seems obvious, then, that here no causal agency can be attributed to the person who is being taken up into fellowship, for the higher form cannot be in any way be derived from the lower stages" (CF 493). This theological conviction confronts the fundamental anthropological truth that human beings are spontaneously active. Therefore, the problem of the relationship of human spontaneous activity to the operations of grace ineluctably arises. The complex discussion of §108.6 has not been foisted on Schleiermacher by the dead hand of the Formula of Concord; rather, the problem is generated by the dynamics of Christian experience and the structure

⁴⁵ As his discussion of the original perfection of human nature makes clear (§60), Schleiermacher regards "original perfection" as an ontological structure, not a state that was lost.

of human selfhood; the documents are resources for thinking it through.

3. *Justification: classical Protestantism, new nuances* (§109).—The proposition on justification arrives at the heart of classical Protestantism, justification by faith: “God’s justifying of one who is converted to Him includes the forgiving of his sins, and the recognizing of him as a child of God. This transformation of his relation to God, however, follows only in so far as he has true faith in the Redeemer” (§109). Schleiermacher prefaces his discussion of this proposition with a block of quotations from the Augsburg Confession and four Reformed confessions.⁴⁶

Schleiermacher’s treatment of this proposition is reminiscent of his treatment of §108. Again he notes that “the language of the Confessions cited is not quite consistent, and so the diction of our proposition does not conform to that of every quotation” (§109.1). This observation is followed by a careful sorting through of the terminological issues. Again Schleiermacher makes explicit the differences between Protestant and Roman Catholic views of justification (for the latter, “faith and justification are kept as far apart as possible, in order to more easily to show man’s justification to be dependent on sanctification”; *CF* 497). The basic harmony between Schleiermacher’s proposition and the classical statements is to be found in the idea that “repentance, as the self-consciousness moved by the consciousness of sin, comes to rest in forgiveness” (§109.2, *CF* 498). The changed relationship to God that occurs through fellowship with Christ leads to the consciousness of forgiveness: “the new man . . . no longer takes sin to be his own. . . . The consciousness of guilt is thus abolished. His penal desert must vanish with this” (*CF* 498–99).

Schleiermacher’s language betokens, it seems to me, a shift from a forensic conceptual framework (the sinner is pronounced innocent by the divine judge) to a psychological one: the consciousness of the individual is transformed. This impression is reinforced by Schleiermacher’s critique of the notion of a separate decree of justification for each individual. “All that can be individual or temporal is the effect of a divine act or decree, not the act or decree itself. . . . There is only

⁴⁶ Two quotations will suffice for illustrative purposes (*CF* 496): “And it is taught that we attain the forgiveness of sins and are counted just before God out of grace for Christ’s sake through faith” (Augsburg Confession IV, K&W 38, 40). “To justify means to remit sins, to absolve from guilt and punishment, and to pronounce a man just. . . . Now it is certain that . . . solely by the grace of Christ and not from any merit of ours or consideration for us, we are justified. . . . We receive this justification not through any works but through faith. . . . We therefore teach . . . that man is justified by faith alone in Christ” (Second Helvetic Confession XV, Cochrane 255, 256).

one eternal and universal decree, justifying men for Christ's sake" (§109.3, *CF* 501). The classical formulas are embraced, but a shift in their meaning has occurred. When Schleiermacher speaks of a transformation of the believer's relationship to God, he is talking about the transformation of the believer's consciousness. An additional nuance is added by Schleiermacher's formulation that the sinner is acknowledged as a child of God. This is not, Schleiermacher concedes, the language of the Protestant confessions; he quotes the New Testament warrants for it in his initial block of quotations. Again this is a shift that underscores the psychological as distinct from the forensic framework: what is at stake is the transformation of religious consciousness. Conversion brings about a new relationship to God and a different way of experiencing the world.

Schleiermacher's practice in the section on justification, then, is to maintain continuity with Old Protestantism's basic insights while introducing some nuances and perhaps not-so-subtle shifts of meaning. The language of the confessions is appealed to in support of the distinctively Protestant view—no concessions to the Catholic view are made. Yet there are unmistakable new shades of meaning.

4. *Can faith, grace, and justification be lost? Taking sides where confessions disagree* (§111).—I take my last example of Schleiermacher's use of the Protestant confessions from the section on the doctrine of sanctification. Sanctification refers to the new life of the Christian in fellowship with the Redeemer. In the context of analyzing sanctification, Schleiermacher considers the problem of the sins of the regenerate: "Since they are continually being combated, the sins of those in the state of sanctification always carry their forgiveness with them and have no power to annul the divine grace of regeneration" (§111). Schleiermacher takes up the question, *Can faith, grace, and justification be lost?* His thesis is that "in the state of sanctification there can be no sin that could make regeneration nugatory" (§111.1, *CF* 510). He rejects the view that "a regenerate man, though a new man, might by an act lose the grace of regeneration" (*CF* 511). What makes this issue an interesting test case is that there are confessions on both sides of the issue. Nor do the confessions neatly line up, with the Lutheran on one side and the Reformed on the other; rather, Schleiermacher marshals evidence showing confessions from both communions on both sides of the issue (see the footnotes to §111.2, *CF* 513).

For example, the Lutheran Formula of Concord asserts, "We also condemn and reject the teaching [*dogma*] that faith . . . [is] not lost through intentional sin" (K&W 499), and the Reformed *Declaration of Thorn* maintains that "the reborn themselves as often as they fall back

into sin contrary to conscience, and however long they persevere or remain in those sins, do not retain for that time either living faith, nor the justifying faith of God.”⁴⁷ On the other side of the issue, the *Gallican Confession* states that “faith is not given to the elect only to introduce them into the right way, but also to make them continue in it to the end” (Cochrane 151). Showing that evidence can be found on both sides of the issue from within the same document, Schleiermacher cites the Solid Declaration (XI:20; *CF* 513 n. 3): “God had preordained . . . that he wills to protect them in their great weakness . . . to lift them up when they fall, and to comfort and preserve them” (K&W 644).

“Even though they are backed by teachers of repute, and have made their way into more than one confessional document,” Schleiermacher notes, the formulas that faith, justification, and grace “may be lost have the less claim on our acceptance” than the creedal statements on the other side of the issue (*CF* 513). Schleiermacher uses several strategies to work through this issue. He contextualizes the opposing evidence, showing that it emerged to deal with people who lapsed under duress. He makes the theological argument that those who fall away were not regenerate to begin with. And he shows his own position to be unobjectionable: he rejects the objections of “enthusiasts” and Catholics as resting on misunderstandings. The criteria of the Christian consciousness, he claims, show him to be right (*CF* 514–15). So in this final example we again have a case where the formulas of a sometimes contradictory past need not obligate the present. What is needed is careful theological scrutiny.

IV. CONCLUSION

In this essay I have set out to solve two problems. The narrower, interpretive problem centers on properly understanding the role of the Protestant confessions in Schleiermacher’s dogmatics. This is a question of their normative status and their systematic function—their actual role in Schleiermacher’s argumentation. The broader, historical question concerns Schleiermacher’s relation to the Reformation. How much continuity is there between Schleiermacher’s revisionist, New Protestant dogmatics and the Old Protestant theologies articulated in the symbolic books of the Reformation era?

As far as the first problem is concerned, my argument has shown that for Schleiermacher the Old Protestant confessions have a limited normative significance. They are evidence for distinctively Protestant ex-

⁴⁷ Translation by David Carey.

periences, doctrines, and beliefs. On the issues that were at stake in the Reformation between Catholics and Protestants, Schleiermacher stands with the confessions: he makes no concessions to Catholicism and takes no ecumenical steps toward it. On issues that divided the Lutheran and the Reformed, Schleiermacher has serious ecumenical intentions. He treats the Reformed and Lutheran confessions even-handedly, citing both wherever possible and being critical of both. *The Christian Faith*, although written by a Reformed theologian, is a dogmatics for the United Prussian Protestant church. On many issues, Schleiermacher exhibits great freedom toward the confessions, and he opposes all proposals that would invest them with binding authority. It would be more accurate to say that the confessions are normed, that is, subject to critical assessment, than that they are normative.

The systematic function of the confessions in the argumentation of *The Christian Faith* varies from doctrine to doctrine. On some issues, such as the doctrine of sin and Christology, Schleiermacher introduces a discussion of the confessional statements only after he has worked out his revisionist position; he is concerned to show the harmony of his revisionist account with the older affirmations. In other cases, such as regeneration, justification, and faith, Schleiermacher puts the confessional language up front and works out his own position in dialogue with the Reformed and Lutheran confessions.

As for the larger issues, it is simply wrong to say that Schleiermacher has no positive relation to the Reformation. His use of the Protestant confessions decisively shows that he is not simply wading in the shallows of Reformation theology but has plunged deeply into it. He knows the confessions, Reformed and Lutheran, thoroughly, works through them critically on crucial doctrinal points, and seeks to establish essential continuity with the thought common to the Lutheran and Reformed confessions.⁴⁸ In terms of theological substance, my argument has shown a differentiated relationship between Schleiermacher's doctrinal theology and the Old Protestant confessions. Schleiermacher maintains clear continuity with the centrality of sin and grace of Old Protestant theology. He affirms original sin, properly understood, and the necessity (and possibility through grace) of regeneration. Justification is by faith in Christ and is not contingent upon sanctification. At the same time there are significant shifts. Schleiermacher's theory of original sin differs markedly from that of the confessions. He rejects the idea of a

⁴⁸ Thus, I find Ohst's conclusion (*Schleiermacher und die Bekenntnisschriften*, 266) persuasive: "The reception of Reformation theology is thus elevated above the hopeless alternative of normative validity and undialectical-emancipatory rejection, without falling into unreflective eclecticism."

fall, is critical of the classical two-natures doctrine, and finds the virgin birth and *communicatio idiomatum* to be untenable doctrines. However unhappy he may be with some of the antisnergistic language of the Solid Declaration, he does not advocate the synergistic position. Despite his revisionism, Schleiermacher's approach is relatively conservative: he is consistently concerned to demonstrate the coherence of his revisionist forms of doctrines with the confessions—coherence at least with their intentions, if not always their formulas. Old formulas are capable of reinterpretation: the old language is retained with a new, unobjectionable meaning, as, for example, in the cases of guilt for original sin, imputed righteousness, and the doctrine of the atonement. Some subtle shifts of meaning take place in the doctrine of justification, which I have characterized as a shift from forensic to psychological categories. At the same time, Schleiermacher does not hesitate to reject outright confessional positions when he finds them theologically problematic. I have shown clear examples of this in the doctrines of the fall, the virgin birth, and the *communicatio idiomatum*. In sum, Schleiermacher's relation to the Protestant confessions is not all of a piece but, rather, varies both methodologically and materially.

If Schleiermacher's dogmatics is to be properly understood, it is necessary to grasp both the systematic function and the material significance of his use of the Lutheran and Reformed confessions. An understanding of the argumentation of *The Christian Faith* and an assessment of Schleiermacher's place in the history of Protestantism, especially with respect to the Reformation, hinge on it. Finally, an understanding of Schleiermacher's principles and practice suggests how history can be taken seriously, yet criticized and revised, in contemporary theology. Any Protestant theology must come to clarity on the question of continuity and change in the development of doctrine. Schleiermacher's solution may not be our own, but it is a suggestive model of what responsibility to the past might be.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ For a very different approach, which also cites the Protestant confessions extensively, cf. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1871–73).

Beauty, Benevolence, and Virtue in Jonathan Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue*

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I. TRUE VIRTUE AND ITS DISCONTENTS

To contemporary commentators, Jonathan Edwards's claims concerning the moral life are summarized in *The Nature of True Virtue* (1765).¹ In his influential *Jonathan Edwards* (1949), Perry Miller described *True Virtue* as an "uncompleted summa" that represents "Edwards at his very greatest," recapitulating his earlier writings.² With some modification, recent commentators concur with this assessment and confer upon *True Virtue* the status of paradigm text, treating it as a Rosetta stone that renders Edwards's theological ethics comprehensible. Roland Delattre and William Spohn use *True Virtue* to reconcile Edwards's aesthetics with his ethics.³ Norman Fiering and William Frankena view *True Virtue* as an independent work of moral philosophy.⁴ Gerald McDermott de-

¹ The edition of *The Nature of True Virtue* used in this essay is from *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 8, *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

² Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (Cleveland: World, 1964), 285.

³ Roland A. Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards: An Essay in Aesthetics and Theological Ethics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), passim, "The Theological Ethics of Jonathan Edwards: An Homage to Paul Ramsey," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 19, no. 2 (1991): 71–102, and "Aesthetics and Ethics: Jonathan Edwards and the Recovery of Aesthetics for Religious Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 31, no. 2 (2003): 277–97; William Spohn, "Sovereign Beauty: Jonathan Edwards and the Nature of True Virtue," *Theological Studies* 42, no. 3 (1981): 394–421. See also Clyde Holbrook, *The Ethics of Jonathan Edwards: Morality and Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1973), 97–186.

⁴ Norman Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 322–79; William K. Frankena, "Foreword," in Jonathan Edwards, *The Nature of True Virtue* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), v–xiii.

velops from *True Virtue* Edwards's public theology.⁵ Belden Lane draws from the sensibility and aesthetics Edwards articulated in *True Virtue* an ethical account of valuing nature that can inform contemporary environmental ethics.⁶ Even those who consider it misleading to view *True Virtue* in isolation from Edwards's other writings, such as Jean Porter and Stephen Wilson, nonetheless use it to outline Edwards's ethics and to draw comparisons with classic and contemporary accounts of virtue.⁷

Theologians who immediately followed Edwards, however, did not share this enthusiasm. Within the field of moral philosophy, Edwards's *Freedom of the Will* (1754) exerted much more influence, commanding both national and international attention.⁸ Those who applied Edwards's insights appropriated terminology from *True Virtue*, such as "disinterested benevolence," but preferred his *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746), *The Life of David Brainerd* (1749), and *Personal Narrative* (1765).⁹

Indeed, many found fault with *True Virtue*. Pointed repudiations appeared shortly after *True Virtue* and its companion piece, *Concerning the End for which God Created the World*, were published posthumously under the title *Two Dissertations*.¹⁰ Although Edwards had defenders, particularly Samuel Hopkins (1721–1803) and other "new divinity" theologians, by the nineteenth century even they recognized shortcomings in

⁵ Gerald R. McDermott, "Poverty, Patriotism, and National Covenant: Jonathan Edwards and Public Life," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 31, no. 2 (2003): 229–51.

⁶ Belden C. Lane, "Jonathan Edwards on Beauty, Desire, and the Sensory World," *Theological Studies* 65 (2004): 44–72.

⁷ Stephen A. Wilson and Jean Porter, "Taking the Measure of Jonathan Edwards for Contemporary Religious Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 31, no. 2 (2003): 181–99; Stephen A. Wilson, "Jonathan Edwards's Virtue: Diverse Sources, Multiple Meanings, and the Lessons of History for Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 31, no. 2 (2003): 201–28; Jean Porter, "Virtue Ethics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Ethics*, ed. Robin Gill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 103–6.

⁸ See Allen C. Guelzo, *Edwards on the Will: A Century of American Theological Debate* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), and "The Return of the Will: Jonathan Edwards and the Possibilities of Free Will," in *Edwards in Our Time: Jonathan Edwards and the Shaping of American Religion*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee and Allen C. Guelzo (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999).

⁹ See Joseph A. Conforti, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 62–107. See also David W. Bebbington, "Remembered around the World: The International Scope of Edwards's Legacy"; D. Bruce Hindmarsh, "The Reception of Jonathan Edwards by Early Evangelicals in England"; Christopher W. Mitchell, "Jonathan Edwards's Scottish Connection"; and Stuart Piggin, "The Expanding Knowledge of God: Jonathan Edwards's Influence on Missionary Thinking and Promotion": all in *Jonathan Edwards at Home and Abroad: Historical Memories, Cultural Movements, Global Horizons*, ed. David W. Kling and Douglas A. Sweeney (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 177–200.

¹⁰ Holbrook, *Ethics of Jonathan Edwards*, 113–33.

True Virtue. Edwards Amasa Park (1808–1900), a new divinity theologian and prominent commentator on Edwards, acknowledged one criticism in “The Duties of a Theologian” (1840). While Edwards was without peer, there was need for a theology that did not lose the natural in the supernatural or the particular in the universal. “We need and crave a theology, as sacred and spiritual as his” but “one we can take with us” into “humanizing scenes where virtue holds her sway not merely as an abstract duty of a ‘love to being in general,’ but also as the more familiar grace of a love to some beings in particular.”¹¹ F. D. Maurice offered another criticism in his two-volume *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy* (1886). Edwards set the “mould” for “American theology and philosophy,” such that compatriots “who try to substitute Berkeley, or Butler, or Malebranche, or Condillac, or Kant, or Hegel” force “themselves into an unnatural position, and must suffer from the effort.” Edwards’s theology, however, was detached and insufficient. His vision of God as a perfectly happy and beautiful “Divine Being” appears bloodless and loveless when placed “side by side with the faith that the man of sorrows is the express image of this Being, that he who bore all griefs for the sake of man is his only begotten son.”¹²

In this essay, I will offer an interpretation of *True Virtue* that destabilizes contemporary appraisals and responds to the criticisms just mentioned. Rather than paradigm texts, I will argue, *True Virtue* and *God’s End* are better understood as apologetical engagements of the moral sense philosophy of Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746), an ordained minister and university professor who was a moderate defender of naturalized ethics and one of the formative figures of the Scottish Enlightenment.¹³ Edwards developed arguments that worked from beliefs he and Hutcheson shared concerning the interconnection of beauty, benevolence, and virtue. Absent from Edwards’s arguments, however, was a theological discussion of the doctrinal commitments that distinguished

¹¹ Edwards Amasa Park, “The Duties of the Theologian,” *American Biblical Repository* 2, no. 4 (1840): 374; quoted in Henry F. May, “Jonathan Edwards and America,” in *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience*, ed. Nathan Hatch and Harry Stout (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 22.

¹² Frederick Denison Maurice, *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1886), 2:471–72. Maurice’s comments were directed to *Freedom of the Will*, but the objections he raises concern Edwards’s vision.

¹³ For more on Hutcheson and his influence, see David Allen, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Longman, 2002), 137–38; Luigi Turco, “Moral Sense and the Foundations of Morals,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. Alexander Broadie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 136–56; George Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985). A concise biography is found in Arthur Hermon, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World* (New York: Three Rivers, 2001), 62–84.

his project from Hutcheson's. As a result, while Edwards generated in *True Virtue* a moral account that was intelligible in terms of the common moral vocabulary he and Hutcheson accepted, he could not refute or resolve their differences, and therefore his apologetical project was less than fully successful. Further, the account Edwards developed in *True Virtue* failed to do justice to the richness and distinctiveness of his ethics, particularly those aspects of this moral thought that he generated from doctrinal, rather than merely philosophical, reflection. To know what beauty, benevolence, and virtue mean for Edwards, it is necessary to look as well at writings where he grounds them in specific Christian doctrines, which I will do later in this essay.

By neglecting the apologetical concerns that conditioned *True Virtue*, contemporary commentators therefore inappropriately privilege a work that does not reflect the nuance and complexity of Edwards's theological ethics. Further, contemporary appraisals mistakenly attribute to Edwards a unique, "theocentric" emphasis that is also evident, I will demonstrate, in Hutcheson's thought.¹⁴ What distinguishes Edwards as a moral theologian is not the philosophical terms he draws from Hutcheson's moral sense philosophy but the theological commitments that condition this appropriation. Consequently, while the criticisms mentioned earlier are valid, viewing *True Virtue* as an apologetical exercise shifts attention to other writings where Edwards's theological reflection does not suffer from these perceived deficiencies.

II. HUTCHESON'S INQUIRY AND EDWARDS'S TRUE VIRTUE

To establish the apologetical context of *True Virtue*, it is necessary to revisit another apologetical effort, *The Great Doctrine of Original Sin Defended* (1758).¹⁵ Edwards referred to Hutcheson in his defense of "orig-

¹⁴ Too often, contemporary commentators tend to conflate Hume's and Shaftesbury's secularist agenda with Hutcheson's Christian appropriation of moral sense philosophy. For examples of this conflation, see Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, 285–91; Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought*, 60–61, passim; Wilson, "Jonathan Edwards's Virtue," 208–13; and Richard A. S. Hall, "Did Berkeley Influence Edwards? Common Critique of the Moral Sense Theory," in *Jonathan Edwards's Writings: Text, Context, Interpretation*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 105. For a detailed exploration and contrast between Hume, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson, see Jerome B. Schneewind, *The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 295–309, 333–42, 354–77.

¹⁵ Edwards's full title is *The Great Doctrine of Original Sin defended; Evidences of its Truth produced, and Arguments to the Contrary answered*. The edition cited in this essay is from *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 3, *Original Sin*, ed. Clyde A. Holbrook (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970). Paul Ramsey noted that Edwards had contact with Hutcheson's thought as early as 1738—several years before writing *True Virtue*. See "Appendix II: Jonathan Edwards on the Moral Sense," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 8:703–4. Ramsey maintained that, while Ed-

inal righteousness,” that is, the doctrine that before the fall humans possessed capacities or “dispositions” that made perfect communion with God possible. Against rationalists such as John Taylor (1694–1761) and Samuel Clarke (1679–1729), who argued that virtue is preceded by a free and undetermined act of choice, Hutcheson’s sentimentalism provided a counterpoise, particularly his *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725).¹⁶ Edwards declared Hutcheson’s position “evidently agreeable to the nature of things and the voice of human sense and reason” and quoted the following excerpt from the *Inquiry*:¹⁷ “Every action which we apprehend as either morally good or evil, is always supposed to flow from some affections towards sensitive natures. And whatever we call virtue or vice, is either some such affection or some action *consequent upon it*. . . . All the actions counted religious in any country, are supposed by those who count them so, to flow from some affections towards the Deity: and whatever we call social virtue, we still suppose to *flow from* affections towards our fellow creatures.”¹⁸

As this excerpt indicates, in the *Inquiry* Hutcheson defined virtue in terms of benevolence rather than in terms of free decisions, prudential considerations, or the practical intellect. Like the affections that attend the mind’s apprehension of beauty, harmony, and proportion, the moral sense is the innate approval of all that maintains sociality and the public good. Just as we have an “internal sense” of the beauty of physical proportions and relations, so we have a “moral sense” of those “affections, actions, or characters of rational agents, which we call virtuous.” Virtue therefore has “one general foundation” in benevolence. As the disinterested “desire of the happiness of another,” however, benevolence has three levels of extensiveness. In its most universal sense, benevolence is a “good-will towards all beings capable of happiness or

wards may have drawn the term “moral sense” from Hutcheson, this appropriation does not suggest that Hutcheson had any influence on Edwards’s own thought. Indeed “to claim more” than familiarity “is to venture into unknown territory and to wander along footpaths no one left,” for the term “‘moral sense’ encompassed a host of Edwards’s opponents” (“Appendix II,” 694–95). Ramsey did not, however, investigate the possibility that Edwards tried to engage Hutcheson’s work apologetically, by appropriating those concepts he accepted and refuting those he did not. Further, Ramsey seems to have operated with a very shallow understanding of Hutcheson in particular and moral sense philosophy in general, focusing very narrowly on questions of moral epistemology and the conscience.

¹⁶ Hutcheson’s full title is *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty in Two Treatises*. Edwards used the fourth edition (London, 1738; repr., Charlottesville, VA: Lincoln-Rembrandt, 1993). In writing this essay, I also used the first edition (London, 1725), reprinted in the *Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson*, vol. 1, facsimile edition prepared by B. Fabian (Hildesheim: Olms, 1971).

¹⁷ Edwards, *Original Sin*, 224.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 225. Here Edwards quotes from Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, II.II.1, 125–26 (1725 ed.).

misery.” In a more restricted sense, benevolence is the desire for the “happiness of certain smaller systems,” in the form of “patriotism,” “friendship,” and “parental affection.” Finally, benevolence issues in individual acts that express “particular passions of love, pity, sympathy,” and “congratulation.” Every sense of benevolence is commendable, but only the universal desires the “good of the whole.” In living the moral life, we should therefore cultivate our inclination to “universal benevolence” and work for the “most extensive happiness of all the rational agents to whom our influence can reach.”¹⁹ Hutcheson thus views perceptions of beauty, expressions of benevolence, and the possession of virtue as interconnected in the moral sense.

Although he drew his moral sense philosophy from the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713), who preferred the Stoics as moral and religious guides, Hutcheson argued that his moral sense philosophy was compatible with Christianity.²⁰ This commitment is evident not only in the excerpt quoted earlier but also in other passages of the *Inquiry*. Hutcheson allowed that it was impossible to prove the necessity of a benevolent deity, and he granted that God could have created humans differently, so that we do not take pleasure in benevolence.²¹ But the mere existence of benevolence provides evidence that God is a benevolent being. Further, the greatest demonstration of God’s “universal benevolence” is that God made benevolent creatures such as ourselves when there was no necessity to do so. The “obvious frame of the world” therefore makes probable the existence of “the Deity *benevolent* in the most *universal impartial manner*.”²²

If these reflections appear lukewarm by Christian standards, Hutcheson’s *Inquiry* was itself conditioned by the apologetic concern to refute the egoistic naturalism of Bernard de Mandeville (1670–1733). Mandeville argued that private vices and selfishness contributed to the common good; thus, Hutcheson’s task in the *Inquiry* was to disprove

¹⁹ Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, II.II.i, 127 (1725 ed.), II.III.i–ix, 150–65 (1725 ed.). For more on Hutcheson’s relationship to Aristotle, see Alasdair MacIntyre’s *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 260–80.

²⁰ Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, Preface, xvii (1738 ed.). For more on Shaftesbury’s idiosyncratic religious and moral reflections, see Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660–1780*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2:86–114.

²¹ Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, I.VIII.iv–v, 94–97 (1725 ed.), II.VII.x–xi, 274 (1725 ed.). In other words, Hutcheson rejects “first cause” arguments and considers “design” arguments probable but not necessary. Further, God’s will toward us is contingent rather than necessary. See Michael A. Stewart, “Religion and Rational Theology,” in Broadie, *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, 39–40, 56. See also Schneewind, *Invention of Autonomy*, 339.

²² Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, II.VII.x–xi, 274–76 (1725 ed.).

Mandeville's egoism by showing that benevolence is grounded in nature and essential for human flourishing.²³ In his *System of Moral Philosophy* (1755), however, Hutcheson argued that being conscious of God provided a supervening motive to live virtuously:²⁴

A constant regard to God in all our actions and enjoyments, will give a new beauty to every virtue, by making it an act of gratitude and love to him; and increase our pleasure in every enjoyment, as it will appear an evidence of his goodness: it will give a diviner purity and simplicity of heart, to conceive all our virtuous dispositions as implanted by God in our hearts. . . . Our minds shall be called off from the lower views of honors, or returns of men, and from all contempt or pride toward our fellows who share not equally this goodness. . . . Our hearts will chiefly regard his approbation, our aims shall be obtained when we act the part assigned us faithfully and gratefully to our great creator, let others act as they please toward us.²⁵

Despite this theocentrism, Hutcheson departed from the Reformed orthodoxy that preceded him. Hutcheson refrained from discussing doctrines like the Trinity, and the metaphysical distinctions he drew from his predecessors were sifted through the deliverances of the moral sense. He accepted the traditional distinction between incommunicable and communicable divine attributes: the former, such as infinity or immutability, humans cannot share or receive; the latter, such as knowledge or beneficence, are reflected in human nature imperfectly and analogously.²⁶ But he drew the line between Creator and creature more sharply than his forebears had. Transposed into the grammar of benevolence, this entails that while a benevolent God created benevolent creatures, the benevolence in each is distinct. Al-

²³ In the subtitle to the first edition of the *Inquiry*, Hutcheson writes that his purpose is to write a treatise in which "the principles of the late earl of Shaftesbury are explained and defended against the author of the *Fable of the Bees*," which refers to Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees: Private Vices, Public Benefits* (1714). For more on Mandeville, see Schneewind, *Invention of Autonomy*, 323–29. For Hutcheson's apologetical engagement of Mandeville, see Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*, 159, 173–75.

²⁴ Admittedly, the connection I draw between Hutcheson's earlier and later writings on God is perhaps contestable. Among commentators on Hutcheson are those who argue that his thought lacks coherence and progressed through different stages of development, depending on the audience for whom he was writing. I do not believe, however, that the connection I am making here is controversial or commits one to the thesis that all of Hutcheson's writings necessarily cohere. For a recent example of this interpretation, see James Moore, "The Two Systems of Francis Hutcheson: On the Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment," in *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. Michael A. Stewart (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 37–59. The edition of *A System of Moral Philosophy* I use in this essay is from the *Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson*, vol. 5, facsimile edition prepared by B. Fabian (Hildesheim: Olms, 1969).

²⁵ Hutcheson, *System of Moral Philosophy*, I.x, 216.

²⁶ See Hutcheson, *Synopsis Metaphysicae* (1744), in the *Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson*, vol. 7, facsimile edition prepared by B. Fabian (Hildesheim: Olms, 1971), III.ii–v, 97–123.

though divine and human benevolence are analogous, the expression of the latter represents merely the realization of unaided human nature. Hutcheson minimized, in other words, the sense of participation or subsistence in God that the traditional distinction had identified. For Hutcheson, divine and human benevolence correspond to each other, but there is no participation of God's love in human nature through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.²⁷

Further, Hutcheson rejected unitary approaches to love, in particular the Augustinian doctrine that all love is the diffusion of God's love and that we must love all things as they are in God and God in all things. Such a view, Hutcheson argued in *Illustrations upon the Moral Sense* (1728), overlooks the particular love for creatures viewed as "good beings distinct from God." It is therefore necessary to differentiate expressions of benevolence. Hutcheson asked, "Does the parental affection direct a man to love the Deity, or his children?" Though "we must approve the highest affections toward the Deity," our "affections towards creatures, if they be distinct natures, must be approved" as well.²⁸ Hutcheson adopted, then, a pluralist position with regard to benevolence. The ethical life does not hinge on whether or not all our loves can be resolved into the love of God, but on whether or not we honor each love appropriately.

Finally, Hutcheson did not believe that the soul's affections changed as a result of the fall. Where the traditional doctrine of original sin asserted that the fall caused disharmony and corruption in the affections, Hutcheson argued that the deliverances of the moral sense were misled only by artifice, treachery, bad education, custom, and inappropriate associations of ideas.²⁹ Instead of blaming our sinfulness, we should learn to prioritize our loves through self-reflection. Hutcheson also had no use for the correlative belief that through grace we regain spiritual affections lost in the fall that alone can quiet inordinate desires.

Hutcheson's *Inquiry* therefore presented a different challenge from the positions Edwards opposed in *Original Sin*. Although Hutcheson did not accept central tenets of Reformed orthodoxy—even, ironically,

²⁷ For an example of how the traditional distinction operated in Reformed scholasticism to develop a participatory doctrine of the Spirit's indwelling while avoiding metaphysical merger, see Francis Turretini (1623–87), *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 3 vols., trans. George M. Giger, ed. James T. Dennison Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P. & R., 1992), 1:190, 2:182.

²⁸ Francis Hutcheson, *Illustrations upon the Moral Sense* (1728), in *Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson*, vol. 2, facsimile edition prepared by B. Fabian (Hildesheim: Olms, 1971), sec. 6, 329–33.

²⁹ Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, I.VII.i–v, 79–87 (1725 ed.). See Moore, "The Two Systems of Francis Hutcheson," 52–53.

the doctrine that Edwards had cited him to defend—Hutcheson and Edwards both located moral agency in the affections and construed virtue in terms of beauty and benevolence. For example, in *Religious Affections*, Edwards argued that human nature is a fountain of affections—the mind is never an “indifferent, unaffected spectator” but is either “liking or disliking,” “pleased or displeased.”³⁰ Edwards defined the moral life not in terms of making the right decisions, or cultivating the character through habituation, but in terms of the change of affections through the reception of a “new sense” of the love of God.³¹ Edwards conceived of the love born of this change as a participation in the “beauty” or “excellency” that flows from God.³²

In two respects, however, Hutcheson and Edwards disagreed. First, where Hutcheson viewed the moral sense as the work of unaided human nature, Edwards viewed the new sense as entirely the work of the indwelling Spirit. The new sense is “spiritual” and “supernatural,” altering the “present exercise, sensation, and frame of the soul” through “God’s communicating himself and his Holy Spirit.”³³ Consequently, it differs from “natural” affections and “natural principles” such as “honesty, justice, generosity, good nature, and public spirit.” If the former is the communication of the “moral image of God,” the latter are merely the “natural” image of God represented in human “reason and understanding.” Second, where Hutcheson held a pluralist view of benevolence, Edwards held a unitary view that sees all love as aspects of God’s love. God’s own love, modeled perfectly in Christ’s redemption and given through the Spirit’s indwelling, gives definitive shape to disinterested benevolence. Truly “gracious affections” are ecstatic—they have “their foundation out of the self, in God and Jesus Christ.”³⁴

To respond to Hutcheson therefore demanded a different apologetics than what Edwards had pursued in previous works, where he opposed perspectives that could be dismissed entirely. Hutcheson’s moral sense philosophy required a constructive engagement that acknowledged Hutcheson’s insights while refuting his departures from orthodoxy. At the end of *Original Sin*, Edwards announced the project’s completion: for readers who desired consideration of “the arguments made

³⁰ Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2, *Religious Affections*, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 96. For the sake of economy, I have chosen *Religious Affections* to illustrate the differences between Hutcheson and Edwards. There are many other writings, as the rest of this essay will illustrate, where Edwards speaks of the topics of beauty, benevolence, and virtue.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 253.

³² *Ibid.*, 262–63.

³³ *Ibid.*, 340.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 254, 253.

by many late writers from the universal sense . . . I ask leave to refer them to a *Treatise on the Nature of True Virtue*, lying by me prepared for the press, which may ere long be exhibited to public view.”³⁵

III. EDWARDS’S TWO DISSERTATIONS

In publishing *True Virtue* alongside *God’s End* under the title *Two Dissertations*, Edwards shadowed the structure of Hutcheson’s *Inquiry*. Where Hutcheson had organized his *Inquiry* into two “treatises,” Edwards organized his response into two “dissertations.”³⁶

In *God’s End*, Edwards argued that God alone is the proper end for God’s creation of the world and the source of all benevolence.³⁷ Edwards developed this argument over the course of two chapters. The first concerns “what reason seems to dictate” viewed independently of “revelation.”³⁸ If an agent’s highest “end” is determined by what that agent values absolutely and intrinsically, then no other end could serve as God’s end in creation other than God’s self. As the “Supreme Being” and ground of all “existence,” God is also the sum of all “excellence” and therefore more worthy of “regard” than any other being in the universe. Justice alone dictates this to be the case: if a “third being of perfect wisdom and rectitude,” who was “neither the Creator nor one of the creatures” and “perfectly indifferent and disinterested,” were to determine the “regard that every part of existence should have,” that being would “determine that the whole universe” should proceed “with a view to God as the supreme and last end of all.”³⁹ Therefore, as the “all-comprehending being,” God’s “supreme and infinite regard to himself” is a “fit and decent” attitude anyone with sufficient objectivity would share.⁴⁰

In the second chapter, Edwards inquired “what is to be learned from Holy Scriptures.”⁴¹ Throughout, the biblical witness testifies that God’s

³⁵ Edwards, *Original Sin*, 433.

³⁶ Paul Ramsey rightly argued that each of Edwards’s dissertations is the “mirror image” of the other; “the ‘end’ for which God created the world must be the ‘end’ of a truly virtuous and holy life.” But Ramsey did not notice the extent to which Edwards engaged concepts from the *Inquiry* as he wrote both *God’s End* and *True Virtue*. See Ramsey, “Editor’s Introduction,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 8:5.

³⁷ Edwards, *God’s End*, 535. At points, my analysis of *God’s End* and *True Virtue* follows what I have written previously in William Danaher Jr., *The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 205–20. Nonetheless, what I write here revises and modifies my previous interpretation, particularly with regard to the tensions inherent in Christian apologetics.

³⁸ Edwards, *God’s End*, 419.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 423–25.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 455–56.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 417, 465.

motivation for acting is regard for God's "glory." Edwards defined "glory" as the external "praise" of God's inherent excellence, which is exhibited throughout creation. As the intelligent part of creation, humanity's highest end consists in "beholding God's glory, in esteeming and loving it."⁴² God delights in this love as an extension of God's own delight in God's self; nonetheless, the love of intelligent creatures does not fulfill any interest or need in God. Further, God's self-love and "the love of the public are not to be distinguished," because "God's being as it were comprehends all."⁴³ God's self-love and the love of intelligent creatures "are united in one, as the happiness of the creature aimed at is happiness in union with himself."⁴⁴

Running through both chapters in *God's End* is a reiteration of Neoplatonism. Consistent with Neoplatonism, Edwards described the divine nature and agency in terms of a framework of *exitus* and *reditus*. God is a unitary and all-sufficient being, who possesses an effulgence that emanates throughout created existence and communicates to intelligent beings the desire for knowledge of and union with God, the ground of all being.⁴⁵ There is "an infinite fullness of all possible good in God, a fullness of every perfection," such that there is a "communication or emanation *ad extra*" flowing "out in abundant streams, as beams from the sun."⁴⁶ The divine "refulgence shines upon and into the creature, and is reflected back to the luminary," such that the "beams of glory come from God, and are something of God, and are refunded back to their original."⁴⁷

To elaborate on this Neoplatonic vision, however, Edwards borrowed terms and concepts from Hutcheson. At points, this reliance is obvious: Edwards cited the practice of "late philosophers" to define "virtue" as "public affection or general benevolence" in order to argue that the love of God underlies all benevolence. For if a person "truly loves the public, he necessarily loves Love to the public"; accordingly, "universal benevolence in the highest sense" is the same thing with "benevolence

⁴² Ibid., 533.

⁴³ Ibid., 455.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 533.

⁴⁵ Many have noted the vein of Neoplatonism running through *God's End*. See, e.g., Holbrook, *Ethics of Jonathan Edwards*, 104–5; Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought*, 329ff.; Douglas J. Elwood, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 12–32; Sang Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (1988; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 127. For more on Neoplatonism, particularly the theme of *exitus* and *reditus*, see A. C. Lloyd, *The Anatomy of Neo-platonism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 98–139.

⁴⁶ Edwards, *God's End*, 432.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 531.

to the divine being, who is in effect Universal being.”⁴⁸ At other points, this reliance is more subtle: Edwards’s argument concerning the esteem due God followed Hutcheson’s early articulation of the ideal observer theory.⁴⁹ Hutcheson believed that “every spectator” would approve of “the pursuit of public good more than private” and that this judgment is not founded in “any reason or truth” but in the “moral sense.”⁵⁰ Likewise, as we have seen, Edwards believed that the judgment of God’s supreme worthiness merely reflected what a “perfectly indifferent and disinterested” spectator would determine as just, all things considered.

Although implicit, Edwards’s most substantive appropriation of Hutcheson’s moral sense philosophy occurs early in *God’s End*, where he introduced an axiology that he developed from Hutcheson. Though Hutcheson believed that the affections are primary, he also believed that reason could determine the truth of a “proposition” and evaluate actions. Any intentional action therefore conforms either to justifying or exciting reasons. Justifying reasons identify that part of an action that leads to its approval or disapproval—for example, robbery disturbs society. Exciting reasons identify those ends that make human action coherent. These ends are either “ultimate,” that is, “desired without a view to anything else,” or “subordinate,” that is, “desired with a view to something else.” Of the two, Hutcheson emphasized exciting reasons, for what should motivate us to act morally are affections rather than reasons per se. Further, it was a mistake to extrapolate from ultimate ends an overarching conception of the “infinite good, or greatest possible aggregate, or sum of happiness, under which all particular pleasures may be included,” for, unlike the moral sense, “the reasons which excite one nature may not excite another.” Finally, such an attempt was bound to degenerate into a prudential calculus that placed “self-love” over “benevolence.”⁵¹

In his introduction to *God’s End*, Edwards stretched Hutcheson’s axiology to fit his Neoplatonism. Like Hutcheson, Edwards divided the ends that structure intentional action into the categories of “ultimate” and “subordinate.” Edwards added, however, three additional categories of ultimate ends. The first is between a “chief” end, that is, “an end that is most valued; and therefore most sought after by an agent,”

⁴⁸ Ibid., 456.

⁴⁹ Although Adam Smith (1723–90) and David Hume provided the definitive statement of the ideal observer theory, it originated in the thought of Hutcheson. See Richard B. Brant, “Ideal Observer,” in *Encyclopedia of Ethics*, 2 vols., ed. L. C. Becker and C. B. Becker (New York: Routledge, 2001), 2:827–29.

⁵⁰ Hutcheson, *Illustrations*, sec. 1, 225–26.

⁵¹ Ibid., 213–29.

and an “inferior” end, that is, “an end that may be ultimate, but secondary.”⁵² The second is between a “chief” end that organizes a specific act, such as eating a piece of fruit, and the “supreme” end, that is, the “one ultimate end” that influences all that an agent does to the point that “no other end can be superior to it.” The third is between an “original” end, that is, one that the agent loves “independent of all conditions” or “circumstances,” and a “consequential” end, that is, an end the agent loves only “hypothetically and consequentially” in a “particular case.”⁵³

Edwards used this axiology to introduce an analogy for God’s “original” and “supreme” end in creation. Out of the simple love for “society,” a person desires a family. But once he or she has a family, other values become desirable, such as “peace, good order, and mutual justice and friendship.” All of these desires are ultimate desires, and yet the “justice and peace of a family” are consequential ends in comparison to the original end of desiring a family.⁵⁴ In the same way, just as no one starts a family simply to be wise and just, so the divine attributes of wisdom and justice did not serve as God’s original end in creation. Rather, God’s original, supreme end was “to communicate of his own infinite fullness of good.”⁵⁵ This disposition “to communicate of his own fullness” is “benevolence or love, because it is the same disposition that is exercised in love: ’tis the very fountain from whence love originally proceeds, when taken in its most proper sense.”⁵⁶ Therefore, what “excited” God to “create the world” was the simple desire to express benevolence so that “God’s glory should be known by a glorious society of created beings.”⁵⁷

In *True Virtue*, Edwards explored what truly qualifies as “disinterested benevolence” in humans, arguing that it is the love of “consent” to God as “being in general.” Edwards interweaves two arguments to argue why this is so. The first is aesthetic. All agree that virtue is a moral “beauty or excellency” that has its seat in the “*disposition and will*,” or the “heart.” The question, however, is what comprises this beauty? Like intrinsic beauty, virtue is beautiful viewed from the most comprehensive standpoint possible. Virtue is not a “particular beauty” that is viewed within a limited “private sphere” but a “general beauty,” or something that appears beautiful when viewed “universally, with regard

⁵² Edwards, *God’s End*, 407.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 410–11.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 412.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 433.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 439.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 435, 431.

to all its tendencies and its connections.”⁵⁸ Further, the beauty of virtue is not “secondary beauty,” or the mere delight in harmony, order, or proportion. Rather, it is “primary beauty,” or the relation of “consent, agreement, or union of being” that attends “spiritual or moral beings.”⁵⁹ Therefore, true virtue must consist in “benevolence” to God as “being in general.” For if virtue is a general beauty, and general beauty refers to that which is beautiful in all its relations, then true virtue must be a “union of heart” and “consent with the great whole,” which is “immediately exercised in a general good will.”⁶⁰ And if true virtue is a primary beauty, and primary beauty is exercised only in spiritual relations, then as the sum of all spiritual relations, God is the proper object of true virtue.

The second argument concerns benevolence. If virtue is an instance of beauty, then something other than beauty must be its source and object. To maintain otherwise would be to fall into circular reasoning, arguing that “the beauty of intelligent beings primarily consists in love to beauty, or that their virtue first of all consists in their love to virtue.” But if beauty is not the object of virtue, then the love of true virtue cannot be “complacence,” or the love that “presupposes beauty” in the “beloved.” Nor can it be a benevolence motivated by complacence or gratitude, for, in either case, the cause of benevolence does not originate in the agent’s nature. Ironically, the only love that can be the source of virtue’s beauty is that which does not recognize “beauty” in “particular beings.” True virtue therefore embodies God’s “absolute benevolence” described in *God’s End*.⁶¹ The “benevolence or goodness in the divine Being” is the “ground” of creaturely “existence” and “beauty.” Similarly, the benevolence of true virtue is the love of “those that are not considered as beautiful; unless mere existence be accounted a beauty.”⁶²

Essentially, Edwards argued that Hutcheson fell into inconsistency when he placed the most extensive sense of benevolence—“good-will towards all beings capable of happiness or misery”—alongside the benevolence expressed to particular social spheres and entities. In contrast, Edwards argued that virtuous benevolence irreducibly exists in “supreme love to God” and that particular loves are valid only as reflections of this supreme love. No “affection whatsoever to any creature, or any system of created beings, which is not dependent on, or

⁵⁸ Edwards, *True Virtue*, 239–40.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 561.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 540.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 543–44.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 540–42.

subordinate to, a propensity or union of heart to God, the Supreme and Infinite Being, can be of the nature of true virtue.”⁶³ Hence, “all schemes of religion or moral philosophy that treat benevolence in any other way are defective, if they ignore the essential subordination of virtue to God.” Referring no doubt to Hutcheson, Edwards argued that “there seems to be an inconsistency in some writers on morality.” While “they don’t wholly exclude a regard for the Deity out of their systems,” they “esteem it a less important and subordinate part of true morality and insist on benevolence to the created system.” But “if true virtue consists partly in respect for God, then doubtless it consists chiefly in it.”⁶⁴

Nonetheless, Hutcheson’s moral sense theory prompted Edwards to offer a thorough account of the claims of particularity in his unitive vision. True benevolence “will seek the good of every individual being unless it be conceived as not consistent with the highest good of being in general.”⁶⁵ Other loves, especially “complacency” and the “benevolence” that arises from “gratitude,” are licit so long as they “imply *consent* and *union* with Being in general.”⁶⁶ Even social relations motivated entirely by natural affections are reminiscent of true virtue and “tend to the good of the world.”⁶⁷ Included in these natural affections are the principles of justice, the powers of the “conscience,” “self-love,” and parental affections.⁶⁸ Although these are not to be confused with true virtue, they have utility as restraints on “vice” and “wickedness.” They can also mediate the love of true virtue, making possible “a virtuous love” of “parents to children,” of “near relatives,” of “our town, or country, or nation,” and “between the sexes.”⁶⁹

Engagement with Hutcheson’s moral sense philosophy, then, is evident in both *God’s End* and *True Virtue*. Nonetheless, had Hutcheson found Edwards’s account coherent, he would have been under no obligation to declare Edwards’s position convincing. With regard to *God’s End*, Edwards had misused Hutcheson’s axiology, for Hutcheson believed that overarching conceptions of the good threatened the sovereignty of the moral sense. Hutcheson would have also objected to Edwards’s unitary account of love. As we have seen, though he did not deny that God is supremely benevolent, Hutcheson argued that each expression of benevolence has its own integrity, which suggests that

⁶³ Ibid., 556–57, 559–60.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 553.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 545.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 547–48.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 616.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 567.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 614, 617.

God has created a plurality of loves in the universe, each with its own claim.

Hutcheson's defense of particular loves would have also figured in his response to *True Virtue*. To the charge that he had confused the love of God with the love of particular beings, Hutcheson would have responded that particular affections exist in human nature to counterbalance the desire for universal benevolence.⁷⁰ Drawing from classical sources, Hutcheson argued that *storge*—the Greek term signifying parental affection—refers to the love of all special relations and smaller communities. God could have created “orders of rational beings” who possessed only a “universal good-will to all” without “any further bonds of affection.”⁷¹ Since God did not, it must be the case that these affections are morally significant and contribute to human flourishing. Our “natural and particular affections” and “friendships” suggest that often “the good of the whole requires a stricter attachment to a part.” Indeed, given how important special relations are in human development, even the obligation of “universal benevolence” directs us to “study their interests” with “special care and affection.”⁷²

IV. BEAUTY, BENEVOLENCE, AND VIRTUE IN EDWARDS'S OTHER WRITINGS

As an apologetical exercise, then, Edwards's *Two Dissertations* failed to refute Hutcheson's moral sense philosophy, and we are left with a standöff between two rival accounts. The reason for this standoff was neither a disagreement over moral vocabulary nor Edwards's more theocentric vision of the moral life—as we have noted, Hutcheson also believed that God was the ultimate source and exemplar of love. Rather, it was their conflicting views of divine and human interaction. Where Hutcheson argued that divine and human benevolence operate concurrently, Edwards argued that this relation is participatory. Further, where Hutcheson viewed human benevolence as the expression of natural affections unaided by grace, Edwards viewed true virtue as nothing other than the communication of God's own love to the regenerate. The metaphysics he constructed in *God's End* and the arguments he developed in *True Virtue* presupposed that God's Spirit indwells the soul and that this indwelling is itself the source of true

⁷⁰ Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, II.III.viii, 164 (1725 ed.).

⁷¹ Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, 3rd ed. (1742), sec. 2, 51, 53; quoted in Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*, 209.

⁷² Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, II.III.x, 165–66 (1725 ed.).

virtue. At no point, however, did Edwards try to justify this belief, for two reasons: First, like the “moral sense,” the “divine sense” of true virtue cannot be conveyed through “argumentation”—it is an “immediate sensation” of “beauty” similar to the experience of honey’s “sweetness.”⁷³ Second, to engage in further justifications for this belief required discussion of particular Christian doctrines, and this would have overstepped the apologetical constraints Edwards had accepted.

Viewed narrowly, it does appear that Edwards constructed an intelligible account that appropriated insights from Hutcheson’s moral sense philosophy to develop his own unitary vision of divine and human benevolence. If ultimately unpersuasive, Edwards’s apologetical engagement of Hutcheson’s sentimentalism was effective, particularly if the purpose of apologetics is to present cogent arguments for a given faith claim that are abstracted from particular traditions and social locations. Further, the conviction that the Holy Spirit indwells the saints, which grounded the metaphysics and arguments Edwards developed in the *Two Dissertations*, represents a mainstream doctrinal commitment of Christian theology, one that makes possible the comparison between Edwards and other signal theologians. Of course, Hutcheson also purported to offer a Christian account of virtue, and any appeal to the Christian tradition to adjudicate between rival accounts must recognize that long-standing, irresolvable differences exist within that same tradition. Even so, it is possible to compare respective treatments of central doctrines that should figure in an adequately Christian account of the moral life.

As I have argued elsewhere, had Edwards made recourse to the Trinitarian reflection that informed his theological vision, he would have developed a better articulation of the position he defended in *God’s End* and *True Virtue*.⁷⁴ Indeed, in both dissertations, there are passages where Edwards adopted Trinitarian grammar to convey his point better. These passages are extraneous to the arguments he presented against Hutcheson, but they help explain his insistence on the Spirit’s indwelling: to describe how the saints’ love of God is a relationship of deepening intimacy that enables them to participate spiritually in the life of God, Edwards referred in *God’s End* to the *perichoresis* between the persons of the Trinity. The culmination of the spiritual life is therefore one where “we will forever come nearer and nearer to that strictness and perfection of union there is between the Father and the

⁷³ Edwards, *True Virtue*, 619–20. For more on the difference between truth claims and justification that I use here, see Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics after Babel: The Language of Morals and Their Discontents* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 13–59.

⁷⁴ See Danaher, *The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards*, 216–18.

Son.”⁷⁵ Similarly, in *True Virtue* Edwards appropriated Trinitarian grammar to describe how mutuality in human relations is an image of the “love and friendship which subsist eternally and necessarily between the several persons of the Godhead, or that infinite propensity there is in these three persons one to another.”⁷⁶ The indwelling of the Spirit, then, represents more than Edwards’s commitment to the evangelical doctrine of regeneration, over and against Hutcheson’s naturalism, including as it does his conviction that *theosis* represents the ultimate framework for the moral life and a fully adequate Christian anthropology.

In this article, however, we can assay Edwards’s apologetical project by illustrating how his engagement with Hutcheson’s moral sense philosophy obscured, rather than illuminated, the doctrinal commitments that lay behind *God’s End* and *True Virtue*, particularly with regard to the way they affect Edwards’s understanding of beauty, benevolence, and virtue. Concerning beauty, Edwards followed Hutcheson in defining it as the perception of “uniformity in the midst of variety.”⁷⁷ The beauty of an object, idea, or relation depends on the harmony achieved from its constituent parts, so that the greater the harmony achieved, the more beautiful something is. But if this unitive aesthetic is evident in other writings, it does not reflect the complexity surrounding the use of beauty in Edwards’s thought. In fact, Edwards deployed two aesthetics in his thought, depending on which aspects of God’s character and revelation he wanted to stress. The unitive aesthetic provided Edwards with an appropriate way to connect the Triune being of God with human perceptions of beauty and excellency. Thus, in “The Mind,” Edwards wrote that God’s “excellence” consists in “the mutual love of the Father and the Son” that generates “the personal Holy Spirit,” who is God’s “infinite beauty” and the source of “God’s infinite consent to being in general.”⁷⁸ As we have seen, Edwards returned to this aesthetic in the *Two Dissertations*, and it is often taken as the totality of his understanding of beauty.

But Edwards chose another aesthetic to describe the saving work of Christ. Unlike the unitive aesthetic, this christological aesthetic is bivalent—its power lay not in achieving harmony out of diverse constituencies but in reconciling two incongruities without the loss of integrity to either. Edwards explored this aesthetic in his sermon “The

⁷⁵ Edwards, *God’s End*, 443.

⁷⁶ Edwards, *True Virtue*, 557.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 562; Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, I.II.iii, 15 (1725 ed.).

⁷⁸ Edwards, “The Mind,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 6, *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, ed. Wallace Anderson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 364.

Excellency of Christ" (1738). Within Jesus Christ, there are "incompatible" and "diverse excellencies" that reflect the union of divine and human natures in the same person. In Christ, there is both "infinite worthiness of good, and the greatest patience under the sufferings of evil," such as "is not properly predicable of God the Father, and of the Holy Ghost." As the "mediator," Christ perfectly conjoins "majesty" and "meekness," "holiness" and "humility," "self-sufficiency" and "an entire trust and reliance on God."⁷⁹

Particularly with regard to Christ's suffering, Edwards's bivalent aesthetic accommodates evil in a different way than the unitive aesthetic does. Where a unitive aesthetic sees evil as the privation of being, in a bivalent aesthetic evil is absorbed, transformed, and vanquished. Thus, in the Crucifixion, Christ "was never so in his enemies' hands as in the time of his last suffering"; yet, at the same time, "it was principally by means of those sufferings that he conquered and overthrew his enemies." For "the devil had as it were swallowed up Christ, as the whale did Jonah," but Christ "was deadly poison to him," gave him "a mortal wound, and forced him to vomit him up again."⁸⁰ The Crucifixion therefore represents the conjunction of God's infinite justice and mercy—Christ has "grace sufficient for every sinner" and bestows the "greatest good" of "friendship" and spiritual "union" with "the Father and the Son." In addition, through the Incarnation, Christ fully identified with human suffering. Christ's "humiliation was great, in being born in such low condition," in "living in poverty," and in "suffering such manifold and bitter reproaches as he suffered while he went about preaching and working miracles." Accordingly, Edwards addressed the "distressed soul." Christ "has had experience" of "the afflictions you now suffer," for Christ "has come down to us, and has taken our nature, and is become one of us, and calls himself our friend, our brother, and our companion."⁸¹

Receiving the gift of grace, then, depends not only on recognizing that God is the ultimate source of our perceptions of beauty but also on recognizing the particular beauty of Christ as well as the beauty of Christ's particular love for human beings. The presence of this bivalent

⁷⁹ Edwards, "The Excellency of Christ," in *The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader*, ed. Wilson Kinnach, Kenneth Minkema, and Douglas Sweeney (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 164–72. In the interest of economy, I have grouped the notations from this sermon, noting the passages from which I have culled the quotations in the body of this essay.

⁸⁰ Edwards, "Excellency," 181. Here Edwards appropriates the "fish hook" simile for the atonement originated by Gregory of Nyssa in his *Catechetical Oration*, an excerpt of which is found in *Christology of the Later Fathers*, ed. Edward Hardy and Cyril Richardson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), 296–301.

⁸¹ Edwards, "Excellency," 176–92.

aesthetic in Edwards's thought demonstrates that Edwards understood that the beauty of God's Triune character and economy transcended the unitive aesthetic he deployed in *God's End* and *True Virtue*.

A similar restriction of Edwards's theological vision is evident with benevolence. As we have seen, in *God's End* and *True Virtue*, Edwards subordinated other loves to benevolence. True benevolence is self-motivated and expressed regardless of the attractiveness of the beloved, and other loves are legitimate only if founded on this absolute benevolence. As with his unitive aesthetic, commendations of benevolence recur in his other writings. This subordination, however, is rare. For the most part, Edwards preferred a relation of complementarity between benevolence and other forms of love. In his "Treatise on Grace," while describing the love of the Trinity, Edwards wrote that the benevolence "the Father and the Son have in each other is not to be distinguished from their complacence one in another, wherein love does most essentially consist." Correlatively, in the life of grace, the saints' first love of God is a complacence in God's beauty, which provides the foundation for benevolence toward God and neighbor. Indeed, Edwards described complacence as the "foundation" and "reason" for benevolence.⁸²

The interplay between complacence and benevolence is also evident in Edwards's "Miscellanies" notebooks. In a passage entitled "End of Creation," Edwards wrote that "God takes complacence in communicating felicity, and he made all things for this complacence." Transposed into Trinitarian grammar, this means that complacence as much as benevolence lies behind the "communication of the goodness of God." As the "express and complete image" of the Father, the Son perfectly received the Father's benevolence and complacence, such that creation was unnecessary. Nonetheless, the Son "has also an inclination to communicate himself," and "this was the end of the creation," that is, the "communication of the happiness of the Son of God" to humanity. In addition to revealing God's diffusive nature, the Incarnation also reveals, remarkably, a complacence in God born of a sense of incompleteness and the desire for mutuality. As the bride of Christ, the "church" represents the "completeness of Christ," such that "Christ is not complete without his spouse."⁸³

Edwards returned to this relation of complementarity in further re-

⁸² Edwards, "Treatise on Grace," in *Treatise on Grace and Other Posthumously Published Writings*, ed. P. Helm (Cambridge: Clarke, 1971), 64, 49–50.

⁸³ Edwards, entries 92 and 104 of the "Miscellanies" notebooks, found in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 13, *The Miscellanies*, entry nos. a–z, aa–zz, 1–500, ed. Thomas Schafer (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 256, 272.

flections on Christ's Incarnation. By virtue of the Incarnation, every form of love is assumed and transformed, including friendship and sexual desire. Concerning friendship, "there is a natural inclination in the creature, not only to the adoration of a glorious being infinitely superior, but to friendship." If God "had not thus descended to us," this inclination "might have been subordinate to a supreme regard for God." In Jesus Christ, however, "God is come down to us, has taken our nature, and is become one of us, that he might be our companion."⁸⁴ Concerning erotic love, it is also assumed and transformed by Christ. God "has created the human nature to love fellow creatures, which he has principally turned to the other sex." In the person of Christ, the "inclination which is in us turned to the other sex" is expressed "to the church, which is his spouse." Correlatively, the love of God does not "hinder" erotic love but only "refines and purifies it."⁸⁵

These other forms of love play crucial roles in the redeemed life, for they mediate God's love as much as do the "death and sufferings of Christ." On the basis of Christ's self-donation, the saints have an uncommon "intimacy" with him—just as Christ "gave himself" to the saints from "eternity," so "he is theirs to eternity." In heaven "there will be no restraint to his love, no restraint to their enjoyment of himself; nothing will be too full, too inward and intimate for them to be admitted to, but Christ will say to his saints, as in Cant. 5:1, 'Eat, O friends; drink, yea, be drunken, O beloved.'" For "Christ's condescension in taking on him our nature, invites us to ascend high in our intimacy with him," even to the "kisses of his mouth."⁸⁶

It is virtue, however, that suffers the most constriction in the *Two Dissertations*. As we have seen, Edwards defined virtue as a generalized relation of "consent" to "being in general" in order to argue that virtue is a participation in God's own benevolence. This definition, however, does not reflect the extent to which Edwards located his understanding of virtue within thick descriptions of biblical figures, narratives, and fundamental doctrines in other writings. In *Religious Affections*, Edwards used two representative figures to develop his description of virtue. The first figure is Jesus Christ, whose work as "mediator" manifests the "moral perfections of God" that "wonderfully shine forth in every step

⁸⁴ Edwards, entry 510 of the "Miscellanies" notebooks, found in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 18, *The Miscellanies*, entry nos. 501–832, ed. A. Chamberlain (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 54–55.

⁸⁵ Edwards, entry 189 of the "Miscellanies," found in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 13:332.

⁸⁶ Edwards, entry 741 of the "Miscellanies," found in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 18:369–72. Here Edwards perhaps drew from the second sermon of Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) on the *Song of Songs*. See *Bernard of Clairvaux: Selected Works*, trans. G. R. Evans (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 216ff.

of this method of salvation.”⁸⁷ Jesus Christ represents not only a concrete, historical person that Christians are called to imitate but also the new, generative identity and relationship that the saints experience through the coordinated mission of the Son and the Spirit. Christ is the exemplar of a fully realized humanity, of one who has received in full the Spirit’s self-gift, for the “same Spirit that descended on the Head of the Church, descends to the members” so that there is “but one Spirit to the whole mystical body, head, and members of Christ.”⁸⁸

The second figure is the woman depicted in the Gospel of Luke who anointed Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36–50).⁸⁹ This figure represents the recognition of spiritual poverty when faced with the abundance of God’s love for us in Christ. This “eminent saint” had “much of that true love that casts out fear” when she “approached Christ in an amiable and acceptable manner, when she came with that humble modesty, reverence, and shame, when she stood at his feet, weeping behind him, as not being fit to appear before his face, and washed his feet with her tears.” Likewise, a “truly Christian love, either to God or to men, is a humble, brokenhearted love.”⁹⁰

These figures provided more than illustrations of a virtue theory Edwards developed independently. Rather, each provided a prism through which to refract more particular virtues. “Truly gracious affections” clothe the saint with “the lamblike, dovelike spirit and temper of Jesus Christ,” and they beget “such a spirit of love, meekness, quietness, forgiveness and mercy, as appeared in Christ.”⁹¹ We receive these virtues by prayerfully seeking after the affections displayed by Christ in the Gospels. Thus, meekness is a disposition of “gentleness” and “quietness” in the face of “all the storms, injuries, strange behavior, and surprising acts and events of this evil and unreasonable world.” Forgiveness is “a disposition to overlook and forgive injuries.” Mercy is a “disposition” to “pity and relieve” the suffering of “our fellow creatures,” particularly those that are “poor, indigent, and afflicted.”⁹² The woman who washed Jesus’s feet, however, is the best exemplar of the virtue of humility. Following her “manner,” humility stems from recognizing one’s sinfulness when confronted with God’s “dispensation of grace.” But the end of humility lies beyond the posture of penitence—indeed, if humility rests merely in the recognition of sinfulness, it de-

⁸⁷ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 273–74.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 348.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 363, 339.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 344–45.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 350–51, 353, 355.

generates into a “counterfeit humility” in which persons develop a “high opinion of their abasement.” Its proper end is the “Christian duty of self-denial,” which consists in the renunciation of “worldly inclinations” and “self-exaltation,” for a “truly humble person” is “emptied of himself” and “modest in his speech and behavior.”⁹³

Another aspect of virtue that is absent from Edwards’s engagement with moral sense philosophy is the relation between virtue and the church. As we have seen, in *True Virtue* Edwards described virtue in entirely subjective and individualistic terms—virtue is a disposition possessed by an individual with regard to his or her affection for God. In *Charity and Its Fruits* (1738), however, Edwards explicitly connected virtue to the church’s life and work as the earthly embodiment of God’s Triune love and society. Although the love of true virtue exists through God’s Spirit indwelling the soul, this love is mediated through the church. Properly understood, the church’s reception of the Spirit is the primary end of God’s Triune redemption: “God the Father is the person of whom the purchase is made; God the Son is the person who makes the purchase, and the Holy Spirit is the gift purchased.” Therefore, the “sum” of all “good things in this life, and the life to come, which are purchased for the church is the Holy Spirit.” This gift is indefectible—“the Spirit of Christ is forever given” that “it may dwell in his church and people forever in influences which shall never fail.” In this way, the “gift of divine love,” which “is an unfailing fruit of the Spirit,” resides in “every one of the true members of Christ’s invisible church.”⁹⁴

Nonetheless, the church currently struggles in a state of adolescent “imperfection.” What keeps the church from reaching perfection is the failure of its people to receive and express the Spirit’s “love and charity” to each other. Therefore, members of the church must develop love-shaped characters in order to live in communities that resist the sins of “selfishness,” “jealousy,” “contention,” “schism,” “revenge,” and “deceit.” When the love of God is absent, the church is no different from other human communities, in which “all are for themselves, and self-interest governs, and all are striving to set themselves up” with no regard for “what becomes of others.” In such God-forsaken communities, “all” seek “worldly good, which is the bone of contention among them,” and there is “injustice,” “opposition” and “cruelty” without “remedy.” In contrast, when the church lives according to the perfection to which it is called, “all are highly esteemed and honored, and

⁹³ Ibid., 312, 319, 315, 339.

⁹⁴ Edwards, *Charity and Its Fruits*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 8:353, 358.

dearly loved by all." In true Augustinian fashion, then, Edwards viewed the church as an *altera civitas*, with its own ethos of love and reconciliation. The world we live in is like a "wilderness" with two radically different "countries" on either side. In one country the love of God reigns supreme, but in the other "self-interest" governs. Those who choose the heavenly country have chosen the "better country."⁹⁵

V. TRUE VIRTUE AND THE THEOLOGICAL ETHICS OF JONATHAN EDWARDS

Far from paradigm text, *True Virtue* was conditioned by Edwards's engagement with Hutcheson's moral sense philosophy. As such, the definitions of beauty, benevolence, and virtue Edwards used in the *Two Dissertations* were determined by those understandings he shared with Hutcheson. Although similar definitions recur in Edwards's other writings, these definitions do not perform the architectonic work they do in the *Two Dissertations*. Indeed, as the previous discussion suggests, Edwards was more a theological *bricoleur* than systematician, appropriating many philosophical and theological sources.⁹⁶ The one constant was his conviction that God's Triune character and missions reveal the ultimate reality against which to locate the moral life. Fittingly, Edwards wrote in his "Miscellanies" notebooks that "duties are founded on doctrines," by which he meant that "the revelation we now have of the Trinity, of the love of God, and of the love of Christ . . . make[s] a vast alteration with respect to the reason and obligations to many amiable and exalted duties, so that they are as it were new."⁹⁷

A proper reading of *True Virtue*, then, recognizes the narrowness of its vision that resulted from the apologetical constraints on its discourse—to know what beauty, benevolence, and virtue mean in Edwards's theological ethics requires an appreciation of how fundamental Christian doctrines influenced his understanding of each. Further, a proper reading of *True Virtue* recognizes that the center of Edwards's theological ethics is found in his "Miscellanies" notebooks, in sermons

⁹⁵ Ibid., 392–94.

⁹⁶ Here I draw my terminology from William Placher and Jeffery Stout, who in turn develop the term *bricoleur* from Claude Levi-Strauss. As Placher notes, *bricoleurs* are "odd-job men who squired away tools and bits of string for possible future use;" likewise, theologian *bricoleurs* are those who use "the bits and pieces inherited from their own tradition" to raise "questions about that tradition" and to move it "to a new way at looking at the world" (*Unapologetic Theology: A Christian Voice in a Pluralistic Conversation* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1989], 67). See also Stout, *Ethics after Babel*, 74–77.

⁹⁷ Edwards, entry 343 of the "Miscellanies" notebooks, found in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 13:416.

such as "The Excellency of Christ," in sermon series such as *Charity and Its Fruits*, and in *Religious Affections*. These works, rather than *True Virtue*, provide the proper entry point into Edwards's theological ethics.

Unfortunately, most studies of Edwards have treated *True Virtue* and *God's End* as summary statements of Edwards's ethics. As noted at the beginning of this essay, the originator of this contemporary line of interpretation is Perry Miller—with little deviation, those who followed him offer extensions or elaborations of his characterization of *True Virtue* as paradigm text. As such, contemporary interpreters try to systematize Edwards's theological ethics in order to assign a definitive theory of virtue to his thought. Ironically, given the widespread recognition of how tradition dependent and culturally conditioned moral thought is, such an account is out of step with those pursuing constructive projects in contemporary theological ethics, most of whom try to articulate moral accounts that emphasize a particular tradition, narratives, and set of practices over moral theories or systems.⁹⁸ As I have tried to show in the preceding discussion, such an account is evident in Edwards's other writings, and to retrieve it requires that the concerns and conceptualities of *True Virtue* move to the background of contemporary appraisals of Edwards's theological ethics.

⁹⁸ For a review of the emphasis on particularity in *Religious Ethics*, see Gene Outka, "The Particularist Turn in Theological and Philosophical Ethics," in *Christian Ethics: Problems and Prospects*, ed. Lisa S. Cahill and James F. Childress (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 1996), 93–118.

Original Grace, Not Destructive Grace: A Feminist Appropriation of Paul Tillich's Notion of Acceptance

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One of the central tenets of Paul Tillich's theology was his appropriation of the Protestant doctrine of justification by grace in terms of the concept of "acceptance." Some feminist theologians have argued that, in light of the need to affirm women's agency more strongly than has been done in much of Western history, the emphasis placed on the passive receiving of grace in this doctrine is problematic. In what follows, I begin with a brief first section in which I introduce the main points of this debate about Tillich's doctrine of justification. Then, in the second, larger, section, I probe further into the issues involved in this debate by correlating anew the "situation" of women and the symbol of "justification." By revisiting both sides of the correlation, I will show that the Protestant doctrine of justification, especially as formulated by Tillich, need not be "doctrina non grata" for feminist theology, provided it is separated from some of the androcentric understandings of God and of sin that traditionally accompany it.

Therefore, the basic method followed here is, in true Tillichian form, one of correlation—although David Tracy's more dynamic version of the method, that of "mutually critical correlations, questions and responses in *both* situation and tradition," is preferred.¹ As such, the method of correlation is "not the mere juxtaposing of a Christian answer with a human problem; it is an interpretive art requiring sensitive readings of both human situations and also of Christian symbols in the

¹ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (London: SCM Press, 1981), 64.

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tradition," notes Mark Taylor.² This implies, in the first place, that various tools should be employed to "read" the situation, in this case that of women. To that end, I refer to discussions of women's oppression and female agency in feminist theory. Second, in order to "read" the Christian symbol of justification, I ask the classic systematic-theological question of coherence, asking not only how this symbol is formulated in and of itself but also where, in the overall theological framework, it is located. I am therefore combining two broad approaches to the field of systematic theology: those that focus on the internal coherence of elements of the faith (whether by focusing on creedal resources, doctrinal loci, or narratives) and those marked by reference to human situations as the origin of systematic reflection (whether taking the form of a correlational, hermeneutical, or liberation approach, or a combination thereof).³ More specifically, I use a coherence approach as an aspect of my overarching correlational approach. By examining the theological matrix within which the doctrine of acceptance is located, I expose some dynamics that might help us understand how this doctrine functions within Tillich's thought and therefore also how it could function in the lives of women.⁴

TILlich's DOCTRINE OF ACCEPTANCE AND ITS FEMINIST CRITICS

Tillich: Heir to the Reformation

In his well-known sermon, *You Are Accepted* (1948), Tillich writes:

Grace strikes us . . . when we are in great pain and restlessness . . . when we walk through the dark valley of a meaningless and empty life . . . when despair destroys all joy and courage. Sometimes at that moment a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: "You are accepted. *You are accepted*, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know. Do not try to do anything now; perhaps later you will

² Mark Kline Taylor, "The Problem of Theological Method," in *Paul Tillich: Theologian of the Boundaries*, ed. Mark Kline Taylor (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 126.

³ Mark Taylor, "Christian Theological Systems," in *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Religion*, ed. Jonathan Z. Smith (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1995), 265–67. As a theology premised upon some version of women's "experience" or situations, feminist theology tends to approach its task through some form of the correlational method, even if not explicitly stated.

⁴ As a "genuine pragmatism" (Paul Tillich, "Method and Reality," in *Paul Tillich: Theologian of the Boundaries*, 128), a correlational-hermeneutical method is also thoroughly rhetorical, i.e., asking questions of practical implications (how theological symbols function) and not only of abstract meaning.

do much. Do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything! *Simply accept the fact that you are accepted!*"⁵

Tillich here formulates in new language the radical affirmation of grace found in the Protestant doctrine of justification. A few remarks regarding the sociological and doctrinal background of this doctrine might help to highlight some of the dynamics involved in it and may point to reasons why Tillich found it to be so central to his own thought. It was certainly not the case that Protestantism "discovered" grace. Classical Catholic theology also held that the Christian life is rooted in the prevenient grace of God. Thomas Aquinas's soteriology, for example, affirms Augustine's view of grace as the root of human salvation and emphasizes that all human merit can only be seen as situated within divine grace.⁶ But the emphasis on grace seems to have largely disappeared from popular piety during the late medieval period, when a variety of sociological and theological factors contributed to an apparently widespread spiritual anxiety.⁷ The Protestant Reformers responded in particular to two theological factors, both of which they saw as contributing to a "religiousness pervaded by anxiety and scrupulosity."⁸ In the first place, they saw the penitential system as psychologically repressive.⁹ Second, they experienced the dominant sote-

⁵ Paul Tillich, "You Are Accepted," in *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Scribner's, 1948), 161–62.

⁶ Aquinas's emphasis on the prevenience of grace can be seen in various places in his work, including his view of the sacraments, his discussion of habits and virtues and, of course, most particularly in his discussion of grace in the *Summa Theologiae*, I–II, 109–14. Aquinas sees human life in terms of a journey, with grace as the divine gift that enables the traveler to find his or her end in God. As such, his views differ from both the Pelagianism Plaskow alludes to and the popular piety that Luther and Calvin reacted to. For helpful discussions of Aquinas, see Joseph Wawrykow, "Grace," and Rik van Nieuwenhove, "'Bearing the Marks of Christ's Passion': Aquinas' Soteriology," both in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rik van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 192–221, 277–302. The Council of Trent likewise confirmed that "justification is to be derived from the prevenient grace of God through Jesus Christ, that is to say, from His vocation, whereby, without any means existing on their parts, they are called," although (in contrast to the Protestant Reformers) they also emphasized that the sinner freely assents to and cooperates with grace (*The Council of Trent*, trans. J. Waterworth [London: Dolman, 1848], Sixth Session, Decree on Justification, chap. 5).

⁷ One should not overstate the case for a general anxiety in the late Middle Ages, even though it is often called the Age of Anxiety. It was also an age of vitality, of deep-seated spirituality, and of widespread reforms (including, but not limited to, the Protestant Reformation) alongside the abuses that existed in the church.

⁸ Jane Dempsey Douglass, *Women, Freedom, and Calvin* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 19.

⁹ Martin Luther, "The Pagan Servitude of the Church" (1520), in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (New York: Anchor Books), 1962. Luther uses terms such as "tyrannize," "oppressive," and "dictator" in connection with the sacramental system

riology of the day in terms of an inwardly focused “works-righteousness” that cannot give the faithful assurance of salvation.¹⁰ Biographies of Luther and Calvin affirm the role of a spirituality of anxiety in Luther’s search for a gracious God and in Calvin’s search for a certainty that lies beyond human imperfections.¹¹

Tillich, although approaching theology from an existentialist perspective, and influenced by the insights of psychology, connected with these concerns of the Reformers. In his classic treatment of the modern problem of existentialist anxiety, *The Courage to Be* (1952), Tillich writes that “Luther, and in fact the whole period, experienced the anxiety of guilt and condemnation as the main form of their anxiety.” In the Lutheran formula that “he who is unjust is just,” or in the more modern expression that “he who is unacceptable is accepted,” writes Tillich, “the victory over anxiety of guilt and condemnation is sharply expressed.” He argues that, “in the fight against the anxiety of guilt by psychotherapy” the idea of acceptance is a crucial one, forming the “basis for the courage of confidence.”¹² He explicitly talks about self-affirmation in this regard, although one should note that he has in mind more than psychological self-affirmation—what he is talking about is the self having the experience of participating in a transcending, accepting reality. Although Tillich does not, of course, go into the question of female agency, his recognition that the self experiences the healing power of accepting grace implies the possibility of reshaping the self to such an extent that healthy agency becomes possible. It is

(260, 263–65). Likewise, Calvin describes the medieval view of repentance in terms of psychological torment, which heightens individuals’ anxiety instead of relieving them from guilt (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles [Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1960], III.4.1). For the role of the penitential system in the late medieval church, see Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

¹⁰ The view of salvation to which Luther and Calvin responded was apparently influenced by nominalism. According to Jane Dempsey Douglass, the problem with the nominalist perspective on justification is that it operated with the notion that humans can love God with perfectly unselfish love but “must produce such love . . . before God will grant grace,” a theology that led to spiritual anxiety (*Women, Freedom, and Calvin*, 19).

¹¹ Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1950); and William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 32–48. Bouwsma’s essay, “Anxiety and the Formation of Early Modern Culture,” in *After the Reformation: Essays in Honor of J. H. Hexter*, ed. Barbara C. Malament (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 215–46, is also very insightful in this regard.

¹² Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 164. For Tillich’s treatment of the late Middle Ages, see his *A History of Christian Thought: From Its Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism*, ed. Carl Braaten (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967), 227–33, and for a brief treatment of the doctrine of justification (where he also argues that it was primarily nominalist distortions that evoked Protestant criticism), see 214.

for this reason that German feminist theologian Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel finds potential for female psychological healing in Tillich's doctrine of acceptance.¹³

However, Moltmann-Wendel is a lone feminist voice of appreciation. The reason is to be found in the particular way in which Protestantism describes the relationship between receiving and acting upon divine grace. Whereas Catholic doctrine "emphasizes the renewal of life by justifying grace," Protestantism sees justification in terms of a divine declaration of righteousness that can only be thankfully received by the sinner.¹⁴ Although Protestantism does not negate the active renewal of life, this is seen not as an aspect of justification but as a distinct process that follows upon justification. This means that, in Protestantism, justification itself is understood in terms of the passive receiving of grace. It is this aspect of the doctrine that has been criticized by feminist theologians. The critiques by Judith Plaskow and Mary Daly will concern us, in particular, since they focused specifically on Tillich's version of the doctrine of justification.

Feminist Critiques

Feminist critiques of the Protestant doctrine of justification should be understood against the background of critiques of the Augustinian trajectory of sin-talk, which saw the root of sin as an overreaching, self-

¹³ Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, *A Land Flowing with Milk and Honey: Perspectives on Feminist Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 151. While Moltmann-Wendel's goal is to find positive affirmations in this doctrine (e.g., "I am good. I am whole. I am beautiful"), my goal is to rethink the whole debate in light of feminist theory and systematic theology.

¹⁴ The Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), sec. 4.3. The *Joint Declaration* very well captures both the similarities and the differences between the Catholic and Protestant doctrines of justification. There is growing consensus that the differences have been overstated in the past, but it remains the case that the Catholic doctrine of justification emphasizes the unity of grace and human activity more than Protestantism, which makes a distinction, if not quite a separation, between the passive receiving of grace and the active Christian life that follows upon it. See Martin Luther, "Two Kinds of Righteousness," for the classic statement on the doctrine of justification by faith: "Through faith in Christ, therefore, Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness and all that he has become ours. . . . This alien righteousness [is] instilled in us without our works by grace alone" (in *Martin Luther*, 87-88). Similarly, Calvin speaks of justification as "the acceptance with which God receives us into his favor" (*Institutes*, III.11.2). The concept of acceptance is clearly central to the Protestant understanding of justification. Tillich notes that the doctrine of justification by faith has often been misunderstood as justification by intellectual assent. So misunderstood, faith would be an act that "forces" God to grant forgiveness. Instead, he says, "*sola fide* means that in the moment that our sins are forgiven, we can do nothing else than receive this forgiveness" (*History of Christian Thought*, 214).

elevating, wanting-to-be-like-God attitude called "pride."¹⁵ The Protestant emphasis on the passive receiving of grace has traditionally been presented as a response to sin in this sense: the basic argument was that the idea of actively contributing to one's salvation is a sign of pride, and hence the self (who is paradigmatically male in classical theology) needs to shed his pride in order to humbly and thankfully receive God's grace. In a long-standing critique, various feminist theologians have pointed out, however, that women tend to sin in ways virtually opposite to that of pride: through negation of the self, or "passivity," as Judith Plaskow puts it.¹⁶

Plaskow's word choice is somewhat problematic. She initially defines "passivity" broadly, indicating various things: the ancient Aristotelian association of women with passivity; the association of women with the family as opposed to the work-world of men; women's tendency to understand their worth in terms of what they can do for others and therefore their dependence on others for their own self-definition; sexual passivity; and psychological passivity, that is, submissiveness, self-abnegation, even masochism. However, eventually her word choice seems to lead her into the trap of seeing the basic "female problem" as the failure to act, that is, passivity in its basic sense. This forms the background for her critique of Tillich's appropriation of the Protestant doctrine of justification, in which she argues that this treatment of grace falls prey to quietism by depicting the failure to act as praiseworthy. She therefore asks whether "the message that the self is forgiven despite persistence in sin foster[s] a passivity which is women's real problem" and suggests that one must be "a bit Pelagian" (by which she apparently means an emphasis on active cooperation with grace) in order to be "faithful to women's experience."¹⁷

Mary Daly is also convinced that the Protestant doctrine of justification has a negative effect on female agency. The problem with Tillich's description of the courage to be as "the courage to accept oneself as accepted in spite of being unacceptable," she says, is that "it is precisely not a description of the courage to be in the full sense of ac-

¹⁵ It is important to keep in mind that the focus of the feminist critique is not so much on Augustine's analysis of sin as an error of love, which is what lies behind his emphasis on pride, but on the way this emphasis reflects androcentric assumptions and how the focus on pride has functioned practically in the lives of women. The critiques have focused particularly on modern theologians such as Reinhold Niebuhr, Karl Barth, and Paul Tillich.

¹⁶ Judith Plaskow, *Sex, Sin and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980), 14.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 157.

cepting responsibility for one's process."¹⁸ She describes Tillich's doctrine of acceptance as a masochistic torture chamber in which the female victim is condemned to live with the "knowledge" that she is really guilty and deserving of condemnation, despite the belief that a loving god [*sic*] forgives her.

Despite differences in style and emphasis, Plaskow and Daly are united in their concern that Tillich's doctrine of acceptance might be hindering the agency that women need to exercise on their own behalf. Therefore, both call for a stronger affirmation of female agency in the understanding of the divine-human relationship. While I often agree with these two scholars, and while I have no desire to isolate Tillich from feminist criticism, I am not convinced by Plaskow and Daly's interpretation of either the situation of women or the Tillichian doctrine of acceptance.¹⁹ In what follows, I therefore want to draw the contours of a new correlation—from a feminist perspective—between the "female situation" and the symbol of justification by grace.

A FEMINIST REREADING

First, the "Female Situation" Revisited

Earlier descriptions of the "female situation" sometimes tended to be essentialist: such descriptions would assume universal gender binaries, that is, the universal sameness of all men and all women, and would describe patriarchy as the universal oppression of all women by all men. These essentialisms have been challenged in recent years by both poststructuralist thinkers, who emphasize the constructed character of realities, and by Majority World thinkers, who emphasize cultural and other differences. Instead of positing universal gender binaries and a monolithic patriarchy, feminists have therefore become increasingly sensitive to the fact that male domination has always been a complex phenomenon intricately interwoven into the overarching system of domination of all women and subaltern men by elite males.²⁰ Yet, even

¹⁸ Tillich, *Courage to Be*, 164; Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon, 1990), 377.

¹⁹ One should recognize that the critiques I am referring to are several decades old and do not necessarily reflect the authors' later perspectives. However, these critiques are still widely taken as the predominant feminist perspective on the Protestant doctrine of justification, and it is this apparent consensus that I am responding to.

²⁰ My preference for the term "patriarchy" to describe women's oppression is due to the influence of Rosemary Radford Ruether, who notes that patriarchy is a broader concept than sexism (see her entries, "Patriarchy" and "Sexism," in the *Dictionary of Feminist Theology*, ed. Letty Russel and J. Shannon Clarkson [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996], 205–6,

though oppression runs along differentiated lines, situating us in various complex spaces that will make a difference to the way we act, it is nevertheless true, as anthropological research shows, that male dominance is a widely prevalent practice and that even subaltern men often dominate women.²¹ Hence, although patriarchy is undoubtedly a complex and multilayered phenomenon, and it is impossible to sketch a universal female situation, it is possible to lift out some pervasive features of male domination that may give a general picture of women's situation(s).

Antonio Gramsci's description of political domination (hegemony) can help to outline the basic dynamics of patriarchy. According to Gramsci, hegemony requires not only oppressive structures but cultural and intellectual power as well: in a hegemonic system, the intellectuals of the ruling class serve the function of articulating the world view, structuring social institutions, and creating an environment of "consent" to the ideas of their class.²² Therefore, as feminist theorist Nancy Fraser points out, hegemony is not simply top-down force, but it is the "discursive face of power," the power to establish the "common sense" of a society.²³ The nature of patriarchy should be understood in these terms as well: like any hegemonic system, patriarchy oppresses not only

257). Although etymologically indicating the notion of "rule of the father," the term in its inception meant not simply male domination of women but the rule of male heads of families of the ruling class over all women, children, and other "dependents," such as slaves (male and female). But the concept has often been used simply to indicate male domination of women, thus ignoring both the historical particularities of different systems of male dominance and the fact of "the domination of the lord, slave master, husband, the elite freeborn educated and propertied man over all wo/men and subaltern men" (Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation* [New York: Continuum, 2000], 95). Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza therefore believes that the term "kyriarchy" indicates the interconnect-edness of various forms of oppression better than "patriarchy" does and that it does not perpetuate the gender binaries that lie behind the latter term. While I share the antiessentialist concerns that lie behind Schüssler Fiorenza's neologism, I nevertheless use the term "patriarchy" for reasons of historical roots and wide usage, as well as not to obscure the reality of male dominance in the overwhelming majority of cultures in the world, even if most of these patriarchal men are themselves under the patriarchal domination of elite ruling men.

²¹ For an excellent anthropological discussion of the cross-cultural prevalence of male dominance, despite instances of female power in various cultures, see Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981). See also Uma Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism* (Routledge: New York, 1997), for a sensitive discussion of the reality of local oppression of women in Majority World contexts, which at the same time recognizes Western complicity in such oppression.

²² *The Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory*, ed. Michael Payne (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 239. In the Western world, the church, with its male hierarchy and doctrines of female submission, has for centuries served the function of intellectual legitimization of patriarchal hegemony.

²³ Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 153.

by external force but also by manipulating the oppressed into giving their "consent." It is important to emphasize that the latter term should not be understood in terms of conscious, individual choice (as in the well-known accusation, "she was asking for it") but in terms of acquiescence to the "commonsense" norms (in reality, patriarchal norms) of society. Patriarchy therefore exhibits not only certain structural features, such as violence against women and the exploitation of female labor, but, as a far-reaching hegemonic system, it also encourages cultural ideals regarding appearance and demeanor that form the subjectivity of women in such a way that it manufactures "internal consent" to patriarchy.

Plaskow and Daly have named this internal consent "passivity." But, as I have already suggested, their terminology points to only one side of the problem. Feminist perspectives on the typical (not universal) "female sin," as it emerges from the long discussion that followed Valerie Saiving's groundbreaking 1960 essay, *The Human Situation: A Feminine View*, point to more than mere lack of agency.²⁴ Susan Nelson Dunfee expresses the problem better when she talks about a "loss of self," echoing Saiving's original phrase of "negation of the self." This is not the same as passivity in the sense of lack of agency. On the contrary, this loss of self has two sides: women not doing enough for themselves, and women doing too much for others. As such, it is not simply lack of agency, but other-directed agency, that frequently characterizes women's subjectivity under patriarchy.

This other-directedness is not simply an internal barrier to women's agency on their own behalf, although it is rooted in cultural scripts that press women into being the servants of the world.²⁵ But, as noted above, this other-directedness is also structurally sanctioned—and en-

²⁴ Valerie Saiving, "The Human Situation: A Feminine View," *Journal of Religion* 40, no. 2 (1960): 100–112. See also Susan Nelson Dunfee, "The Sin of Hiding: A Feminist Critique of Reinhold Niebuhr's Account of the Sin of Pride," *Soundings* 65 (Fall 1982): 316–27; and Mary Potter Engel, "Evil, Sin, and Violation of the Vulnerable," in *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Theologies from the Underside*, ed. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite and Mary Potter Engel (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1998), 159–71. Although Engel agrees with the critiques of the dominant pride paradigm of sin, her discussion is particularly interesting because she rejects a simplistic male/female dichotomizing of sin and argues that at the root of both the sins of pride and of self-loss lies a transgression or distortion of boundaries. According to Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, African American women would name sin in terms of being outside the community, rather than "sloth" (triviality or a loss of boundaries), which might be more typically a problem for white women (*Sex, Race, and God: Christian Feminism in Black and White* [New York: Crossroad, 1989], 78).

²⁵ This is particularly true of women of color, as Jacquelyn Grant points out in her essay, "The Sin of Servanthood: And the Deliverance of Discipleship," in *A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Evil and Suffering*, ed. Emilie M. Townes (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 215.

forced. Various feminist theorists have argued that the now-almost-global capitalist system thrives on the hidden labor of women, that is, the unpaid domestic, reproductive, and caretaking work that women often do.²⁶ Not only is this “extra” labor of women usually discounted as work in industrialized economies, and hence not seen as deserving of economic reward, but studies indicate that women do more than their fair share of work in the world.²⁷ So not only are women often overburdened by the multiple tasks they perform, but they also make up a disproportionate number of the poor. The unpaid nature of much of “women’s work” tends to make women dependent on men and puts women in a position of having to “please” fathers, husbands, pimps, and male bosses for their very survival. The latter is reinforced by cultural scripts regarding beauty and the kind of behavior that makes a woman “acceptable.” To this heady mixture of structural and cultural elements is added, as ultimate reinforcement, pervasive, multifarious violence against women.²⁸

The “female situation,” despite its complexities, is thus, in general, characterized by women carrying heavy burdens—second shifts at home, responsibilities for caretaking and relationships, cultural norms of beauty, and, worst of all, violence. These pervasive features of patriarchy indicate that a term such as “passivity” is not sufficient to describe typical female “sins”—as a matter of fact, these observations point to the fact that “sinning” (in this case, participating in the destruction of the self) and being sinned against (the structural element that encourages such destruction of the female self) are too intertwined to be easily separated. But the point here is that, whether we

²⁶ See, e.g., Joan Williams, *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to Do about It* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Randy Albelda and Chris Tily, *Glass Ceilings and Bottomless Pits: Women’s Work, Women’s Poverty* (Boston: South End, 1997); and, in a more popular genre, Ann Crittenden, *The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World Is Still the Least Valued* (New York: Holt, 2001).

²⁷ According to Berkeley sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild, women in the United States work an extra month per year compared to men. This estimate was based on research done in the 1960s and 1970s, yet in the most recent edition, which contains new research, the author suggests that not much has changed. The title of her book has become part of feminist vocabulary—see Arlie Russell Hochschild and Anne Machung, *The Second Shift* (New York: Penguin, 2003). On a more global scale, the *United Nations Human Development Report, 1995* (New York: UN Development Program), based on a study of thirty-one countries, reported that women, on average (there is, of course, variance among different countries), have fewer leisure hours than men.

²⁸ For a list of various forms of violence against women, see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Introduction,” in *Violence against Women*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Mary Shawn Copeland (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), vii–viii. On the most comprehensive statistics on violence against women to date, see Lori Heise, Mary Ellsberg, and Megan Gottemoeller, “Ending Violence against Women,” in *Population Reports*, Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health Series L, no. 11 (Baltimore: Population Information Program, 1999).

are talking about Western women, on whom Plaskow has focused, or about women in various other contexts, a term such as "passivity" is too narrow to serve as a catch phrase for describing the female situation. In light of these observations, two preliminary conclusions can be drawn about Plaskow and Daly's soteriology.

First, the above-mentioned features of patriarchy indicate that women's passivity with regard to their own well-being often consists of frenetic activity on behalf of others, as well as attempts to please. I want to suggest that women, in the midst of all this activity, might just need a break from having to take responsibility for yet another relationship, from having to work for their salvation, from having to please yet another powerful (patriarchal) presence in their lives. I therefore also suggest that, by ignoring the other half of the "loss of self" and describing the whole complex picture in terms of passivity, Plaskow and Daly are running the risk of adding to women's burdens.

Second, the feminist critique against the pride paradigm of sin has occasionally been used to argue that battered women are guilty of the "sin of silence."²⁹ Although this is a distortion of the feminist critique, it is obviously problematic, especially since, as Mary Potter Engel points out, a lack of self-assertion (passivity in its narrow sense) might be the only survival tool at hand in situations of serious violence.³⁰ To be told that this is sinful behavior is hardly helpful.

In other words, Plaskow and Daly are working with an overly one-sided understanding of the "typical" female pathology, which leads them to propose a problematic soteriology: it asks women to take responsibility for keeping alive yet another relationship, to add to their to-do list yet another task, to try to please yet another powerful person, and it may imply that they are guilty of sin when they choose to play it safe in situations of violence.

Apart from these considerations, moreover, questions can be raised about the way female agency is (implicitly) construed in Plaskow and Daly's soteriology. The notion of the moral agent, that is, "an individual who is capable of choosing and acting in accordance with judgments about what is right, wrong, good, bad, worthy, or unworthy," has come under increased scrutiny in feminist theory in recent years.³¹ Tra-

²⁹ See Sheila Redmond, "'Remember the Good, Forget the Bad': Denial and Family Violence in a Christian Worship Service," in *Women at Worship: Interpretations of North American Diversity*, ed. Marjorie Proctor-Smith and Janet R. Walton (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 77-78.

³⁰ Engel, "Evil, Sin, and Violation of the Vulnerable," 160.

³¹ For a helpful overview, see Diana Tietjens-Meyers, "Agency," in *A Companion to Feminist Philosophy*, ed. Alison M. Jaggar and Iris Marion Young (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 372-82.

ditional discussions of the agent tend to overlook the social and political contexts in which actions take place, operating with the notion of the “autonomous agent.” Feminist theorists reject this notion as a male ruling-class concept, a pretension built upon the labor of oppressed others even while parading as a universal possibility. Instead, they are concerned with the social conditions for and requirements of action, as well as the internal and external barriers to action. In voicing this critique, feminist theorists draw from a variety of insights (psychoanalytical, Foucauldian, theories of difference, etc.), as can be seen from the following excerpt from Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar’s discussion of autonomy:

In contrast to the complete self-transparency, seamless psychic unity, and self-mastery supposedly required by autonomy, the picture of the psyche that emerges from psychoanalytic theory depicts agents as conflict-ridden, often self-deluded, fundamentally opaque to themselves, and driven by archaic drives and desires of which they may not even be aware, let alone be able to master. Critics who draw on Foucauldian theories of power and agency suggest that theories of autonomy assume a Kantian free will, or a true self. This assumption naively ignores the fact that subjects are constituted within and by regimes, discourses, and micropractices of power. There is no pure, self-determining free will that somehow escapes the operations of power, nor is there a true self, there to be discovered through introspective reflection. Agency must be reconceptualized not as a matter of individual will but as an effect of the complex and shifting configurations of power. Feminist theories of difference and otherness allege that the notion of autonomy is a historically, socially, and culturally specific ideal that parades as a universal norm. Not only does this norm suppress internal differentiation within the subject, but also in masking its specificity behind a veneer of universality, it functions coercively to suppress different others.³²

These critiques point to the fact that the subject cannot be understood apart from the society within which he or she is situated—and its patriarchal norms—and can even be said to be constructed by it to a greater or lesser extent.³³ We are scripted beings, set deep within the

See also Monique Deveaux, “Agency,” in *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, ed. Lorraine Code (New York: Routledge, 2000), 15.

³² Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar, “Introduction: Autonomy Refigured,” in *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*, ed. Catriona MacKenzie and Natalie Stoljar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 10–11.

³³ Some authors see the subject as entirely constructed by societal scripts (e.g., Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* [New York: Routledge, 1999]). Others emphasize the autonomous self more, yet still want to recognize the ways in which the self is situated (e.g., Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* [New York: Routledge, 1992]). Butler and Benhabib are usually seen as representatives of the opposite sides of the spectrum with regard to feminist understandings of the subject, with Butler being influenced by Foucault’s emphasis on the role of discursive

social matrix of patriarchy. Plaskow and Daly recognize this to some extent when they notice the negative effect that female socialization under patriarchy has had on women's agency. But female agency should be consistently analyzed against the backdrop of patriarchy—not only when “women's sin” is identified but also when solutions to this typical female pathology are suggested. I agree with Mary McClintock Fulkerson, who argues that, while Daly is aware of the harmful effects of patriarchal discourses on women when it comes to identifying pathological female agency, it would seem that, in Daly's early work at least, resistance to sexism “is founded in subjects who are prior to discourse.”³⁴ The same theoretical inconsistency is present in Plaskow's critique. Both thinkers recognize the problematic way in which female agency is shaped by the discourses of patriarchy but seem to suggest that these discourses can and must be overcome by an autonomous agent who takes “responsibility for her own process” and thereby overcomes her “passivity.” As such, the soteriological “solutions” offered by Daly and Plaskow might actually be buying into malestream hegemonic assumptions about the nature of human agency. Daly and Plaskow, quite contrary to their intentions, to be sure, might be expecting “a woman to be more like a man,” forgetting that “autonomous man” can only exist at the expense of exploited others and is thus really a myth.

If the autonomous subject of modernity is a problematic notion, not only because it is ideologically suspect but also because it ignores the social and political context within which the subject is constituted, then the vexing problem arises: How does the culturally constructed subject rewrite the script?³⁵ This challenge has often been directed at well-known poststructuralist feminist Judith Butler, whose understanding of the subject as a “site of signification” raises the question of how this subject can be the site of resignification. Butler rejects arguments that are premised upon the notion that the subject is able to transcend the formative discourse through some process of reflexive mediation,

practices in forming the subject and Benhabib leaning toward the qualified modernism of Habermas. (For an alternative perspective, which argues that this is a false antithesis, see Fraser, *Justice Interruptus*, 207–24.) Mackenzie and Stoljar (“Introduction: Autonomy Refigured”) seem to take an approach somewhere in the middle of this debate when they emphasize that autonomy needs to be understood in light of the fact that the subject is “constituted within” social systems and power structures.

³⁴ Mary McClintock Fulkerson, “Sexism as Original Sin: Developing a Theacentric Discourse,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59, no. 4 (1991): 653–75. Not all agree with the reading of Daly as essentialist. See Anne-Marie Korte, “Deliver Us from Evil: Bad versus Better Faith in Mary Daly's Feminist Writings,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Mary Daly*, ed. Sarah Lucia Hoagland and Marilyn Frye (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 76–111.

³⁵ Fraser, *Justice Interruptus*, 214–15.

or by finding her “true” prediscursive self.³⁶ She argues that the post-structuralist recognition of the constructed nature of the self does not imply that the subject is determined by the rules through which it is generated because “signification is *not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition.*” Agency, then, “is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition.”³⁷

I find Mackenzie and Stoljar’s language of the self being “constituted within” cultural scripts less problematic than Butler’s language of the self being “constructed by” such scripts, because the former evokes a greater sense of an active (albeit deeply scripted) self, instead of a passive site of signification.³⁸ Yet Butler’s defense of agency even within her strongly constructivist position shows a way forward in rethinking feminist responses to the Protestant doctrine of justification, which does not necessitate reverting to the notion of a prediscursive self. I find the idea of locating agency in a prediscursive self implausible: not only does it ignore the reality of cultural and religious influences on our psyches, but it also seems suspiciously premised upon some kind of metaphysical notion of a preexistent soul “pure” from the influences of the realities within which we live. Recognizing these realities does not have to amount to determinism, and it is here where Butler’s recognition of the dynamic nature of our “scriptedness” is helpful. Her defense points to a real self, a self that does exist and does exercise choice, but whose choices are rooted in reality, including the cultural, psychological and religious realities that have shaped the self. As such, her defense of agency-within-construction can help us to think our way out of the autonomy/determinism dichotomy and thus to rethink the feminist critiques of the Protestant doctrine of justification.

However, although Butler provides some helpful categories from which to think forward, it is theologian David Tracy’s theory of religious experience that provides the insights needed to think this issue through in an even more fruitful manner. Tracy’s theory of religious experience is very helpful to understand the dialectical nature of the

³⁶ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 182.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 185. In an analogical conversation about the nature of culture, which may help to inform this conversation, various feminist theorists and theologians affirm the notion that the cultural constructedness of the subject does not determine the subject, precisely because culture is not a fixed identity but contains a variety of discourses that can be tapped into to change the dominant discourse. See, among others, Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 3–58; Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women’s Theology* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2001), 13; Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 5 ff.; and Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures*, 3–39.

³⁸ Indeed, Mackenzie and Stoljar’s goal is not to reject all notions of autonomy but, rather, to rethink it in terms of relationality.

religious self: simultaneously scripted by traditions and rescripted as “the whole” breaks through these scripts.³⁹ The self is therefore not caught in a static text but is, rather, a living human document participating in a dynamic hermeneutical spiral.⁴⁰ This is somewhat similar (but not identical) to Butler’s notion of agency as located in “variation on that repetition.” Whereas Butler’s agent remains within the confines of language, Tracy’s insight into the dialectical relationship between language (scripts) and extralinguistic experience opens the door for even more radical changes in the script that forms the self and her actions. Based on these insights, I would argue for the possibility of new “words” as well as “extra-linguistic” experiences (including the mystical breaking in of “the whole”) entering the hermeneutical spiral of the discourses within which we live and thereby redirecting our agency. Therefore, to understand the scripted nature of the self is not to see the self as caught in a web of language, a victim of circumstance with little opportunity for change. The cultural, religious, and familial scripts within which we grow up are undeniably powerful in shaping our selves, sometimes nurturing a healthy self, sometimes damaging us and misdirecting our agency toward pathology. We do not “outgrow” these damaging scripts by reaching for an illusory extradiscursive self. Rather, we are able to transcend these scripts as we are taken up into healthier discourses that reshape our selves and reground our agency.

Patriarchal rhetoric is damaging to the female self because it tells women that they are unworthy—but the discourse that tells women they are accepted without having to perform can take the self into a new, healing hermeneutical space. Patriarchal rhetoric misdirects female agency by pressuring women to please others (through their demeanor, dress, service work, etc.). In contrast, the discourse that tells women that the relationship with the divine is not one she has to work for provides an alternative relational model in which the Other would

³⁹ The notion of “the whole” refers to the experience of that which transforms all of reality. David Tracy notes that “in its own self-understanding, a religious perspective claims to speak not of a part but of the whole; without the sense of that reality of the whole, I believe, there is no religion” (*Analogical Imagination*, 159). As such, religion is not just another cultural perspective alongside morality, art, science, economics, and politics. Although each of these constitutes a central part of human reality, it is only in religion that something is articulated that informs, transforms, and even forms the rest of our cultural lives. What Tracy is agitating against here is not the recognition of other disciplines in theology—that would contradict his own correlational approach to the task of theology—but, rather, the reduction of religion to being a synonym for morality, art, science, or politics.

⁴⁰ Tracy puts this view forward clearly in his response to George Lindbeck’s interpretation of him (David Tracy, “Lindbeck’s New Program for Theology: A Reflection,” *Thomist* 49 [1985]: 460–72). For a lengthier discussion, see his *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

please her instead of demanding that she first prove herself "worthy" by her acts.

I therefore suggest that, when female agency is understood as something that is scripted by the complexities of the patriarchal system of oppression, what is needed is not a theology that tells women to delve deep into a fictitious prediscursive self that can act outside the script but, instead, a theology that has the potential of rewriting the scripts that shape women's agency. If the subject is always situated, constituted, even constructed, then change of agency requires a script that resituates, reconstitutes, and reconstructs. In other words, while I wholeheartedly agree with Plaskow and Daly's affirmation of female agency, I suggest that an approach that calls for female agency without basing it on the assurance of unconditional acceptance is not liberating but might actually reinforce the scripts of patriarchy, with their exploitation of female labor and their breaking of female self-affirmation. It might well be that demanding from women the kind of agency that consists of picking themselves up by their bootstraps, so to speak, in order to go against the scripts they inhabit, might come over as yet another job to do, yet another task to be performed. Thus, telling women that they have to work for divine acceptance, or even just have to learn to accept themselves despite their situatedness in scripts that tell them how unworthy they are, might simply serve to reinforce the very patriarchal scripts that feminism opposes, those that tell women to prove their worth by giving themselves to others unceasingly.

The Other Side of the Correlation: The Theological Symbol of Justification in Its Systemic Matrix

It might perhaps be important to mention that Daly and Plaskow, who are originally from Catholic and Jewish backgrounds, respectively, are not the only feminist theologians who are disturbed by the Protestant doctrine of justification. This is not, therefore, a denominationalist issue. Reformed feminist theologian, Serene Jones, although not focusing on Tillich's version, levels similar criticisms against the Lutheran/Calvinist doctrine of justification, particularly its classical emphasis on the shattering of the self.⁴¹ Even Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel (who is

⁴¹ Serene Jones, *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 49–68. Jones's identification of justification with the shattering of the self and of sanctification with the healing of the self leads her to switch the order of the two doctrines, arguing that women need the latter before the former. I find this highly problematic: not only does it not make sense to switch the order of justification and sanctification, given the fact that they exist in logical, not chronological order, but there is no reason why

Lutheran and who, as noted before, appreciates the feminist potential in this doctrine) recognizes that “in its modern form, [the Protestant doctrine of justification] has never been applied to women and worked out in terms of their own selves.”⁴²

In short, these feminist critiques do indeed point to a serious flaw in the traditional symbolism of justification in Protestantism, a flaw that has prevented it from functioning as a healthy alternative script for women. But this flaw does not lie with the doctrine of justification per se, that is, with the doctrine of how the human subject enters into relationship with the divine, or (to put it in more Tillichian terms) what the basis of human participation in the divine is. Instead, I submit that the problem lies with the doctrine of sin and the understanding of God that traditionally accompanied the doctrine of justification.

Karl Barth’s presentation of the doctrine of justification provides a telling example of the way in which this doctrine is often situated within problematic notions of God and sin. In volume I.2 of his *Church Dogmatics*, Barth depicts the true recipient of divine grace as a passive female figure symbolized by Mary.⁴³ Described by Barth as “non-willing, non-achieving, non-creative, non-sovereign,” this female figure passively awaits and receives the grace coming from the Word, which is, of course, the male Christ.⁴⁴ Given Barth’s highly transcendent God concept, one gets the picture here of a male figure “coming down on” a passive female figure. When one adds to that the classical emphasis on sin as pride (from which Barth does not quite escape) and the concomitant notion that the self must be shattered, one ends up with a very disturbing picture of grace.⁴⁵ It is, at best, a disruptive, even a

justification cannot be separated from the kind of hamartiology that calls for the shattering of the self.

⁴² Moltmann-Wendel, *Land Flowing with Milk and Honey*, 157.

⁴³ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. G. T. Thomson and Harold Knight, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936–77), I.2:188 ff.; hereafter *CD*.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 191. Elsewhere, Barth complains about the aesthetic feminization of Christ, thus emphasizing the masculinity of the Christ symbol for him (*ibid.*, III.4:161).

⁴⁵ Daniel Migliore points out that Barth does not see pride as the paradigmatic sin but includes also the “sins of weakness” that feminists have pointed to (“Sin and Self-Loss: Karl Barth and the Feminist Critique of Traditional Doctrines of Sin,” in *Many Voices, One God: Being Faithful in a Pluralistic World*, ed. Walter Brueggeman and George W. Stroup [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998], 139–54). Yet the classical androcentric emphasis on pride as sin sneaks back into Barth’s theology when Barth raves against feminism as a form of hubris (Barth, *CD*, III.4:155–59). But the problem lies deeper. As Alistair McFadyen points out, any notion of a paradigmatic sin implicitly invokes a corresponding paradigmatic virtue, and it appears that, even when pride is seen as predominantly a “male sin,” “the teaching of the tradition appears to be that [it] is to be met by the patient virtue of female passivity: don’t resist when he beats you, for that would add your pride to his” (Alistair McFadyen, *Bound to Sin: Abuse, Holocaust and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000], 138). Therefore, when Barth advises women not to be rebellious, lest they aggravate

rupturing grace, that of a male god-figure coming from above, so to speak, onto the "non-willing, non-achieving, non-creative, non-sovereign," passive female figure, shattering her self in the name of love, and infusing her with his "alien righteousness."

The picture looks somewhat different in Tillich, although, like Barth, he does not entirely manage to escape androcentric notions in his doctrine of sin, as Plaskow quite correctly points out.⁴⁶ Tillich's perspective on sin contains both moments of agreement and moments of disappointment for feminist theologians. As a term denoting a disrupted relationship with the divine Ground of Being, Tillich's notion of "estrangement," which is central to his understanding of sin, holds much promise for feminist theology. Of particular significance for feminist discussions of sin is his description of humans' essential nature in terms of three sets of polar ontological elements in the first volume of his *Systematic Theology*, especially the polar elements of individualization and participation.⁴⁷ In the existential state of estrangement, however, these two polar ontological elements risk breaking down into either loneliness, "in which world and communion are lost," or collectivization, "a loss of individuality and subjectivity whereby the self loses its self-relatedness and is transformed into a mere part of an embracing whole." Both of these are moves toward "not being what we essentially are."⁴⁸

Within the logic of this ontology, estrangement can include both the extreme individualization that is called pride, or a loss of the self in collectivization that feminists point to as the more typical female sin. Indeed, Tillich is at times able to recognize not only the sins of the powerful but also the "sins of weakness" as manifestations of estrangement.⁴⁹ Feminist theologian Susan Lichtman is appreciative of this aspect of Tillich's thought. She argues that, if we keep in mind that the Greek term for sin, "hamartia," means to "miss the mark," then one can posit that self-abnegation and self-worship are actually two points along the same dimension, two opposite ways of missing the mark. In other words, she writes, "both the prideful person, and the passively

male tyranny, but to meet male tyranny as "mature and therefore self-restricting" women who are "in [their] whole existence an appeal to the kindness of man" (Barth, *CD*, III.4:180–81), the paradigmatic "virtue" of the pride paradigm of sin is clearly to be discerned. See in this regard also Joan Arnold Romero, "Karl Barth's Theology of the Word of God: Or, How to Keep Women Silent and in Their Place," in *Women and Religion*, ed. Judith Plaskow and Joan Arnold Romero, rev. ed. (Missoula, MT: Scholar's Press, 1974), 63–73.

⁴⁶ Plaskow, *Sex, Sin and Grace*, 111.

⁴⁷ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951–63), 1:174–86.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁴⁹ Paul Tillich, *The Interpretation of History* (New York: Scribner's, 1936), 93.

dependent one, portray a person alienated from his/her own true nature."⁵⁰

However, in his discussions of sin in volume 2 of the *Systematic Theology*, Tillich reverts to the traditional Augustinian concepts of pride, concupiscence, and unbelief as the various forms of estrangement, with pride as the primary form. Given his own ontological insights about the tension between overidentifying the self and losing the self, it seems contradictory for him to then discuss sin in terms that seem to emphasize hubris (self-elevation).⁵¹ As a matter of fact, even concupiscence is understood by him in terms of the inward turn of the self, rather than in terms of the loss of the self, which suggests a continued reliance on the notion that it is the focus on the self that is ultimately sinful. Of course it is important to keep in mind that Tillich makes a distinction between pride, a moral concept, and hubris, and ontological concept, which he translates as "self-elevation" and which can appear in acts of humility as well as acts of pride. Nevertheless, his use of the term "hubris" remains problematic: not only does he describe hubris largely in terms of pride, but the very choice of hubris as the basic category for both opposites is problematic, for how exactly would humility be a manifestation of ontological self-elevation? Feminist theologians interpret sinful humility as loss of the self in overparticipation with others, thus echoing Tillich's far more useful ontological categories rather than the sinful humility that he sees as a form of self-elevation.

Despite these remnants of androcentric thinking in Tillich's treatment of sin, it remains important for our purposes that Tillich's understanding of sin as rooted in estrangement from the Ground of Being is a move away from an exclusively moral understanding of sin. In this existential concept, Tillich formulated anew the classical Christian insistence that wrongful acts are merely the manifestations of a more fundamental problem, a brokenness, a chasm between humanity and the divine. This notion of brokenness in need of healing is quite similar to what many feminist theologians would espouse. Rita Nakashima Brock, for instance, writes that "sin is a sign of our brokenheartedness, of how damaged we are . . . something to be healed."⁵²

The problem to which Tillich's doctrine of justification is addressed

⁵⁰ Susan Lichtman, "The Concept of Sin in the Theology of Paul Tillich: A Break from Patriarchy?" *Journal of Women and Religion* 8 (Winter 1989): 49–55.

⁵¹ For Tillich's discussion of estrangement as unbelief, hubris, and concupiscence, see *Systematic Theology*, 2:47–55. (I am indebted to Robison B. James of the University of Richmond for an insightful conversation on the issue of this apparent contradiction in Tillich's thought.)

⁵² Rita Nakashima Brock, *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power* (New York: Crossroad, 2000), 7.

is thus the estrangement from ourselves, other beings, and the Ground of our Being. Within the matrix of this hamartiology, the doctrine of justification is not about a sovereign word addressed to the “bad” things we do or (worse yet) the “bad” people we are, but it is about acceptance that overcomes existential estrangement from the Ground of Being. Traditional theological language, which operates with a more personalist understanding of God, might speak of the healing of a broken relationship between God and humanity.⁵³ This is not the destructive grace that has plagued the presentation of the Protestant doctrine of justification, because it does not call for the shattering of the self but, rather, suggests healing of the self. Of course, one manifestation of estrangement might be pride—it is only then that the language of shattering is appropriate. But this need not be the case. Estrangement may also be manifested as the loss of self: then what gets shattered is not that overreaching agency called pride but, rather, the patriarchal script that misdirects agency, kills self-affirmation, and fosters self-loss and even self-hatred.

The first reason why traditional Protestant understandings of justification are problematic, therefore, has to do with the fact that it is traditionally situated within an androcentric understanding of sin—and I have argued that Tillich’s understanding of sin at least partially overcomes the problems inherent in this. The second and more important reason why the symbolic matrix in which Tillich’s doctrine of acceptance is situated, is healing rather than destructive, is his understanding of God. Tillich rejects any form of monarchic monotheism; that is, he denies the notion that God is the Highest Being. He does not use the classical spatial metaphor of divine transcendence in terms of God as the “totally other,” the “highest” being who is, metaphorically speaking, “above” everything else and not of this world. Instead, he uses it to point to a God who transcends the concept of being in the sense that s/he is the power of being in everything else, the Ground of Being, the power of resisting nonbeing, and, as such, being-itself.⁵⁴ Tillich therefore holds the classical double affirmation of God’s transcendence and immanence tightly together. Again, this type of thinking is to be found in feminist theologies as well. Rosemary Radford Ruether expresses this in language quite evocative of Tillich: “The

⁵³ The notion of estrangement is not alien to classical Christian traditions—for example, Augustine suggests something like that in his understanding that sin consists of a turning away from God. The problem lies in the fact that he grounds this alienation from the divine in pride, instead of vice versa, and hence elevates the sins of the powerful to paradigmatic status.

⁵⁴ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:235–36.

God/ess who is primal Matrix, the ground of being-new being, is neither stifling immanence nor rootless transcendence."⁵⁵

As Ground of Being, Tillich's God is not the male monarch that plagues so much Christian and post-Christian imagination. As such, the God who accepts does not "come from above" in the way "he" does in Barth's metaphors. In other words, the sadomasochistic overtones in the classical doctrine of justification by grace are countered in Tillich's understanding of God as the Ground of Being, the God that is not the Totally Other who "comes down on" the passive recipient of grace but the transcending-yet-immanent reality in which the accepted one is rooted.⁵⁶ As such, the self situated in patriarchy and its script of you-are-unacceptable-until-you-perform is resituated within a fundamental relationship in which she is accepted just as she is, without having to exert herself first in order to become acceptable.

Rita Nakashima Brock expresses this well with her use of the concept "original grace," by which she means a "primal interrelatedness," a healing reality that begins at birth.⁵⁷ Within Tillich's system, the relationality of original grace is formulated in terms of the Ground of our Being overcoming our estrangement from ourselves, others, and being itself, and rooting our very selves in a "script" of acceptance—a script that is, at best, not just a word but an experience. I suggested earlier that, if female agency is seen as negatively scripted by patriarchy, then the theology that women need should be one that has the potential to rewrite the scripts that shape women's agency—a theology that enables new being, to put it in Tillichian terms.⁵⁸ As such, far from prohibiting

⁵⁵ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon, 1993), 85.

⁵⁶ See Mary Daly, *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon, 1984), 2, on Barth's theology as sadomasochistic. As I argue above, although Barth's doctrine of justification per se does not differ much from that of Tillich, his overall theology, which is far more hierarchical than that of Tillich, shows that Daly's accusation is more on target in the case of Barth than in the case of Tillich. On this topic, see also Joan Arnold Romero, "The Protestant Principle: A Woman's-Eye View of Barth and Tillich," in *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1998), 319–40.

⁵⁷ Brock, *Journeys by Heart*, 8. Brock sets up the concept of "original grace" as against that of "original sin." Although I likewise reject traditional formulations of original sin, I nevertheless believe that something can be salvaged from its emphasis on the systemic aspect of sin. (See, e.g., Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989], esp. pt. 2). However, her notion of "original grace" powerfully conveys what has been an important strain of classical Christianity: that grace is not simply the response to sin but that which precedes the presence or onset of sin and which is therefore to be seen as the foundation of the divine-human relationship.

⁵⁸ In Christ as New Being, "the one in whom the conflict between the essential unity of God and man and man's existential estrangement is overcome" (Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 2:125), one finds the courage to be—in other words, the courage to be the self that lives in

female agency, the Protestant doctrine of justification can, in situating us in a fundamental relationship in which we are accepted “as is,” lift our agency from the bedrock of patriarchy and onto the Ground of our True Being.

CONCLUSION

In Alice Walker's novel, *The Color Purple*, Celie anxiously asks her friend: “You telling me God love you, and you ain't never done nothing for him? I mean, not go to church, sing in the choir, feed the preacher and all like that?” The reply is one of the best statements of a liberating theology to be found anywhere: “But if God love me, Celie, I don't have to do all that. Unless I want to. There's a lot of other things I can do that I speck God likes. . . . I can simply sit back and wonder at things. Be happy. Be beautiful.”⁵⁹ The author here captures the heart of the old Protestant protest against the gospel of fatigue and anxiety, and the self-affirmation that goes along with the experience of “original grace.” For the Reformers, it was the freedom from endless duties to be performed in order to please God, and the concomitant freedom from anxious feelings of guilt, that were at stake in their cry: grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone! It is ironic that the Protestant denominations have often ended up obscuring their founders' radical concept of grace. At least three distortions of this kind may be mentioned. Grace becomes obscured as churches and individuals put so much emphasis on the personal faith commitment that faith becomes something to be performed. Second, grace can become hidden as believers emphasize the sanctification that is to follow to such an extent that the Christian life once again becomes characterized by anxiety—an occurrence famously noted by Max Weber.⁶⁰ Finally, the Reformers' own androcentrism obscured their insights on the radical nature of grace, as they tied justification so tightly to the traditional notion that pride is the essence of sin that it then calls for a “shattering of the self” as a prerequisite for the reception of gratuitous grace. As we have seen, this distortion has been criticized by feminist theologians. These theologians have made the important point that women do not need the

the world and transcends it, the self who is both individual and participant. In vol. 3 of the *Systematic Theology*, Tillich discusses how self-integration becomes possible—in other words, how the ontological elements of individualization and participation can be held together under the ambiguous conditions of life (*Systematic Theology*, 3:32–34, 38, 41–44, 268–71). It is in the New Being, the Christ, that “the eternal unity of God and man becomes actual under the conditions of existence without being conquered by them” (270).

⁵⁹ Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1982), 176.

⁶⁰ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Los Angeles: Roxbury, 1998). First published in English in 1930.

kind of theology that tells them that humility is the starting point of their participation in the divine, and self-sacrifice the heart of it, since women are already too prone to humility and self-sacrifice.

However, feminist theology needs to be careful not to repeat the first two distortions mentioned above and thereby lose out on the healing potential inherent in the Protestant doctrine of justification—something at least one feminist theologian, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, has noted. I have expanded on this argument by pointing out that, just as women generally do not need more “humble pie” theology, they likewise do not need the kind of theology that tells them that the love and acceptance of the divine Ground of their Being is dependent on their efforts (i.e., their activity). This is particularly important when one keeps in mind that the self-sacrificial humility identified as problematic passivity by Daly, Plaskow, and others is the reverse side of an often self-negating female activity on behalf of others. Moreover, I have argued that, if we take seriously poststructuralist insights regarding the way our subjectivity and agency are constructed by the scripts of patriarchy, it becomes clear that this self-negation is often deeply etched into women’s subjectivity, and therefore it is not helpful to assume that women can just start acting differently by reaching into themselves and finding hypothetical prediscursive selves. Such a stance would assume the androcentric notion of the autonomous agent, that is, the fallacious idea that agency is exercised by an essential self divorced from the cultural scripts and roles we inhabit. When the self is consistently seen as scripted by a complex and ever-shifting discourse, then change in women’s lives needs to be looked for not in the malestream hypothesis of the autonomous self but, rather, in terms of new “words” that can reshape the discourses within which the self is constituted and thereby empower the self to act in new, liberated ways.

We glimpse such a potentially reshaping script in Paul Tillich’s doctrine of unconditional divine acceptance. Tillich’s retrieval of the Protestant doctrine of justification reaches beyond the distortions mentioned above, transcending the troublesome denominationalist triumphalism that has plagued the reception history of this doctrine, going back to the heart of the matter. His retrieval is a radicalization of Luther’s (and Calvin’s) doctrine of justification for a modern age, in the sense that Tillich sees the grace of God as triumphing over both human sin and human doubt.⁶¹ More important, unlike the orthodox

⁶¹ See Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3:221–28. In this regard, Tillich was deeply influenced by his teacher, Martin Kähler (Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, trans. James Luther Adams [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958], xiv–xv). For Tillich this meant that God is paradoxically present in the experience of utter separation from the divine. Serious doubt

and neoorthodox versions of the Protestant doctrine of justification, Tillich's version has potential for appropriation by feminist theology, because it is located within a theological matrix that has done away with the overemphasis on sin as pride and the concomitant notion that the self should be shattered in order to receive grace, and that has done away with the notion of God as a male monarch condescendingly coming from above to present us with "his" grace. Tillich's doctrine of acceptance thus provides us with a notion of "original" grace that grounds us, in contrast to a destructive grace that shatters us.

is still an expression of ultimate concern and thus of what it means to be religious. As Wilhelm Pauck puts it, in Tillich's thought "there is no 'No' without a preceding 'Yes,' or, as Tillich liked to point out, there is no atheism" ("Paul Tillich: Heir of the Nineteenth Century," in *From Luther to Tillich: The Reformers and Their Heirs*, ed. Marion Pauck [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984], 174).

Book Reviews

TYSON, JOSEPH B. *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006. xiv+192 pp. \$39.95 (cloth).

A prevalent explanation for early theologians' failure to mention Acts is that it was neglected until its utility in combating Marcion and various "Gnostics" was discovered circa 175. Joseph Tyson seeks to revive and refine the argument of John Knox that Luke/Acts was created to cope with Marcion's movement (*Marcion and the New Testament* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942]). Uncertainties, as Tyson acknowledges, exist. Among these are Marcion's dates and the content and possible evolution of his thought.

With regard to date, Tyson notes the desire of later authorities to make their forebears early and "heretics" late. An example he did not use is the Trajanic (ca. 115) date for Ignatius's martyrdom, which is based upon the wishful thinking of Eusebius (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.36.1; cf. 3.33–36) and does not constitute evidence. Marcion, or someone with similar ideas, is opposed by the Pastoral Epistles and Polycarp and was thus arguably active in the third decade of the second century. Through a literary analysis of the text, Tyson shows just how suitable the canonical Luke and Acts are for refutation of Marcion (50–78). The burden of proof ought to be upon those who claim that this suitability is fortuitous.

The literary critic then lays aside, for a space, his commitment to the unity of Luke-Acts and takes up the problem of Marcion's "Gospel" (79–120). He argues for a "primitive Luke" that served as the source of both Marcion and the canonical Luke. This is not demonstrable, but it cannot be refuted by the (scanty) extant evidence and has more than conjecture in its favor. The two parts of Luke most open to suspicion of modification are chapters 1–2 (generally recognized as the last section to be written) and 24, yet the links between these units and the beginning and end of Acts are patent. The leading choices are either that an author modified an existing gospel and then wrote Acts or that the person called "Luke" modified his own ("published"?) gospel at the time he wrote Acts. The former gains support from the various pieces of evidence pointing to an earlier edition of Luke and can appeal to simplicity, for it obviates the need to envision Marcion turning to Luke/Acts, rejecting the second volume, and drastically editing the gospel. It is conceivable that Marcion tackled the very evangelist whose project was least congenial to his thought, possibly because he knew of no other gospel, but Tyson is not open to the charge of promoting the least likely solution. (The more conventional hypothesis, that the single author conveniently called "Luke" produced, from Mark, Q, and other sources, his gospel and followed this with Acts would not overturn Tyson's main hypothesis that these books oppose Marcion.)

These proposals will not achieve prompt and universal approval, but they merit serious consideration and specific, rather than general ("not convinc-

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ing”), refutation. In his quest for specificity, Tyson does not consider the probable existence of other radical Paulinists who may have preceded Marcion, as well as various “Gnostics,” whose views would also find no support in Acts. He has focused upon a major heresiarch, whom Irenaeus and Tertullian (Marcion’s chief extant opponents) sought to refute by appeal to Luke and Acts. This book might have profited from reflection upon relevant ancient literary criticism, of which Robert M. Grant has provided a useful summary (*Heresy and Criticism: The Search for Authenticity in Early Christian Literature* [Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1993], 15–32, with a specific study of Marcion, 33–47). Grant shows that charges of spurious composition and interpolation were common (and often enough justified) in the first centuries CE and that tools were developed for engaging such allegations.

John Knox saw merit in F. C. Baur and drew upon the work of Walter Bauer, neither of whom had much of an American following in 1942. It is fitting that Tyson should honor his teacher through revision of one of his fascinating theories in a fresh and well-written manner oriented to the methods and questions of a different era. (Disclosure: Tyson makes use of my *Dating Acts* [Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 2006], and we worked together in the Westar Institute’s Acts Seminar while he was developing this book.)

RICHARD I. PERVO, *St. Paul, Minnesota*.

COOPER, STEPHEN ANDREW. *Marius Victorinus’ Commentary on Galatians: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. xvi+414 pp. \$160.00 (cloth).

This book represents the first English translation of Marius Victorinus’s commentary on Galatians. This is a significant commentary in its own right, for it antedates Ambrosiaster, Augustine, Pelagius, and Rufinus. Victorinus’s commentary is also noteworthy because it is a self-proclaimed simple commentary (“*commentatio simplex*”), unlike Stephen Cooper’s introduction and notes, which are prolix. In the *commentatio simplex*, the exegete proceeds tersely, usually focused on the literal or historical reading of the text. Cooper has a good discussion of the genre of Latin biblical commentary for which this work is a prototype and shows how it is mistaken to assume that Victorinus always follows the literal sense. Victorinus is ready to read in a spiritual sense when the literal sense is problematic (110–26).

The commentary is also stylistically remarkable for its occasional lapses into Paul’s voice. This move certainly adds vitality to the commentary. For example, at the point where Paul admits to seeing James in Jerusalem (Gal. 1:19), Victorinus’s commentary reads “I saw the new thing that James was bandying about and preaching; but because that blasphemy was known to me and rejected by me, so too it ought to be rejected by you, you Galatians!” (266). Victorinus’s paraphrasing style of exegesis is helpful for drawing the implications of Paul’s letter. On Gal. 2:3 Victorinus writes, “Thus an agreement with Paul on the gospel was reached by everyone belonging to the church at Jerusalem. Whence the Galatians are sinning by maintaining that some new thing is to be added to the gospel” (270).

Cooper’s book opens with a complete introduction covering such areas as Victorinus’s life in its context, biblical exegesis in the fourth century, depictions of St. Paul in fourth-century Roman art, Victorinus’s exegesis, and the influ-

ence of his Galatians commentary on Ambrosiaster and Augustine (3–246). Part 2 of the book is the translation of Victorinus's Galatians commentary, copiously annotated by Cooper. Cooper's translation of the commentary is effective, carefully following the Latin text rather than attempting any sort of dynamic equivalency.

The book concludes with three helpful appendixes. The first appendix is a first-rate treatment of the order in which Victorinus's commentaries were originally produced. Cooper places Galatians before Ephesians, following Marin and Frede against Hadot and Gori (346–60). The second appendix is a useful discussion of Victorinus's famous "misreading" of the Greek text of Gal. 1:10 to support his Nicene christology. Cooper demonstrates that Victorinus is actually more competent in Greek than has previously been supposed (361–65). The third appendix is Cooper's reconstruction of Victorinus's *Vetus Latina* lemma for Galatians, including his paragraph breaks (366–69).

A real strength of this volume is that it argues effectively that Victorinus was read by both Ambrosiaster and Augustine. Cooper discusses fifteen passages from Victorinus's Galatians commentary. Of these fifteen, literary continuity is seen with Ambrosiaster in twelve instances (although four of these are weak parallels), and literary continuity between Victorinus and Augustine is seen in eleven of them (241). Cooper's work on this latter pair thus confirms the dependence of Augustine on Victorinus that Nello Cipriani and Eric Plumer have recently been arguing (ix).

Another aspect of this strength is that Cooper does not merely cite parallels; he analyzes how Ambrosiaster uses Victorinus. "One could consider Ambrosiaster the great 'corrector' of Victorinus: abbreviate, soften the anti-Judaism, subtract the metaphysics of the soul which the Origenist Controversy made so theologically incorrect, name the heretics, and—perhaps above all—add cross-references to the Old Testament (245).

A minor weakness of this volume is that Cooper sometimes succumbs to a modernist urge to evaluate the exegesis he encounters. After translating Victorinus's exegesis of Paul's description of staying with Peter for fifteen days in Gal. 1:18, an exegesis that contends that Paul could not have learned his gospel from Peter in so short a time, Cooper observes in a footnote that "Jerome makes the same point. . . . Both exegetes share the odd sensibility that the extent of Paul's knowledge can be accounted for only by a divine revelation of such immensity that such a short (!) period of fifteen days would not suffice for it to have been transmitted humanly" (265 n. 72). This weakness aside, Cooper's introduction and commentary are essential reading for all students of fourth- and fifth-century Latin theology.

MARK REASONER, *Bethel University*.

BRASSE, DAVID. *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006. ix+308 pp. \$49.95 (cloth).

Two decades ago, literary critic and cultural theorist Geoffrey Hart Harpham provocatively described asceticism as the MS-DOS of culture, the underlying programming that allows cultural life to proceed (*The Ascetic Imperative in Culture and Criticism* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987], xi). A decade later, historian of asceticism Richard Valantasis offered a definition that would

become foundational for much subsequent work in the field: asceticism comprises “performances designed to inaugurate an alternative culture, to enable different social relations, and to create a new identity” (“A Theory of the Social Function of Asceticism,” in *Asceticism*, ed. Vincent L. Wimbush and Richard Valantasis [New York: Oxford University Press, 1995], 548). To such broad and overarching metadefinitions, David Brakke responds with a critical supplement, arguing that the ascetic self is produced through struggle and contest with its others. Focusing on the evidence from fourth- and fifth-century Christian Egypt, Brakke generates a portrait of the monk, that quintessential figure in the history of Christian asceticism, as far less a product of contemplative self-formation than the victor in a cosmic battle engaged with his diabolical other(s), demons. As Brakke puts it elegantly in his afterword, “The monk was not simply a man at prayer and not simply someone who through ascetic performances constructed a virtuous self as an alternative to the deadening conventions of society. At the heart of his identity was struggle, resistance, and combat with the forces of evil that surrounded the ancient person” (240–41). The monk qua *monachos* (“the single one”) is forged through struggle, and he comes into singular being only through critical conflict with his multifaceted and multiform nemeses. Brakke makes his compelling case for this thesis through a close reading of a wide array of evidence from fourth- and fifth-century Egyptian Christianity, the Egyptian desert offering the exemplary setting for the staging of such battles.

Demons and the Making of the Monk makes its case in two different sorts of approaches. Part 1, “The Monk in Combat,” approaches the matter through close readings of the bodies of work left by early Christian ascetical theorists in Egypt: Athanasius, Evagrius Ponticus, Pachomius, and Shenoute. In his readings of this rich body of literature, Brakke teases out ancient theoretical idioms steeped equally in biblical precursors and philosophical impulses of the day. The contributions of this part of the book are multiple, but the most significant in my view is Brakke’s ability to evoke what one might call the indigenous theoretical voices of ancient Egyptian Christianity. Rather than fitting the primary material into a contemporary theoretical frame, Brakke draws out the theorizing impulses that pulse through the ancient sources, thereby demonstrating that ancient demonological discourse was the product of a complex and quite sophisticated intellectual tradition.

Part 2 of the book, “War Stories,” cuts through the Egyptian Christian evidence more thematically, focusing with illuminating detail on the production of monastic norms through the literary proliferation of demonic deviants, figured as Ethiopians and black-skinned others, women and female demons, and pagan gods. The other, whether racial/ethnic or gendered or religiously out-of-bounds, reappears throughout the hagiographies and story collections about monastic virtuosi as a figure for disorder, desire, and multiplicity. The monastic self that is produced, through contest and by contrast, is a model of order, *apatheia*, and singleness. Brakke’s analysis of the racialized demonic in chapter 7 makes an especially important contribution to the growing discussion in early Christian studies of “race” as an ancient and modern category relevant for the study of Christian origins.

Throughout the book, one encounters Brakke’s unswerving challenge to an interpretive tradition that is distinctly queasy at the thought of asceticism, worriedly rationalizing or psychologizing the ascetical impulse that motivates the unruly and unsettling figure of the monk haunted in turn by diabolical

thoughts, bodily sensations, and demonic visions. *Demons and the Making of the Monk* will be of great interest to specialists and students alike. For newcomers to the study of early Christian asceticism, the book provides a welcoming entrée into the primary literature and the scholarly apparatus that has grown up around it; it could be very fruitfully used in a survey course on early Christianity. For readers already initiated into the mysteries of ancient Christian asceticism, the book offers new perspectives on well-read texts and an elegant and strong set of arguments with which to engage.

ELIZABETH A. CASTELLI, *Barnard College at Columbia University*.

CLARK, JAMES G. *A Monastic Renaissance at St. Albans: Thomas Walsingham and His Circle, c. 1350–1440*. Oxford Historical Monographs. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. xii+316 pp. \$110.00 (cloth).

In *A Monastic Renaissance at St. Albans*, James Clark makes two explicit arguments. First, he takes issue with that account of late medieval monasticism that suggests that monastic life was in decline by presenting a wealth of evidence about the pedagogical and intellectual activities at St. Albans during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He also makes a more specific point about Thomas Walsingham's role in St. Albans's intellectual life and book production; while recognizing his importance, Clark also collects material that demonstrates that Walsingham was part of larger patterns of activity and change.

By "renaissance," Clark means both a general reinvigoration of intellectual and educational activity and also the more specific ties to humanism, classicism, and continental humanist thinkers. In support of the first, Clark explores the ties of the community to larger societal structures and changes, such as plans for papal reform; he finds that while in some respects, such as the attitude toward new arts curricula (147), the house was conservative, in many other respects the monks were innovators, using new administrative and legal tools and taking on a real role in public discourse. He also ties the intellectual activity at the house to those on the continent, particularly in Italy, arguing for St. Albans's contributions to humanism, as well as for an expanded notion of what kinds of ideas the Renaissance may have included.

Clark's methodology centers on the books of St. Albans—books copied there, books authored by the monks, and books read, annotated, and circulating in the community. Of particular interest is his use of evidence about reading practices, including borrowers' lists showing patterns of interest and study through the whole community. While his research does sometimes take him into other material issues, such as administrative roles, hierarchy, and the availability of private space in the house, Clark's focus is almost entirely on the intellectual, educational, and pedagogical activities of the monks. This focus provides much for scholars of religion; in addition to a full and detailed account of a late medieval English monastic house and the lives of its inhabitants, there is also much interesting material related to the late medieval English heresy Lollardy.

Comparisons to St. Peterborough, Bury St. Edmund's, and Westminster indicate that, at least for the larger houses, these changes and interests Clark finds at St. Albans may be more general for England's monasteries during this time. Scholars interested in the forms of life in these monastic communities will find much here to interest them: Clark produces detailed accounts of the ways in which the material remains of books and the historical evidence of the monk's

intellectual activities (book lists, Oxford rolls, internal administrative histories, and books produced at or acquired for the house) show what sorts of intellectual and communal activities the members of the house participated in. He points in particular to an increased emphasis on academic activity, including internal pedagogy and the house's school, the uses and circulation of texts, the growth of administrative activity, and the ways in which administrative and academic activity were assigned, suggesting that many, if not most, members of the house participated in both.

Much of this material is quite suggestive for the study of Lollardy. Though he does not say so explicitly, much of the work that Clark has done on the relationship between St. Albans and Oxford represents a potential contribution to this study. The last chapter, "Public Issues," clearly articulates the contribution made: "The anti-heretical writings of this period have not attracted the attention which has been accorded to the work of Wycliffites and Lollards themselves and the Benedictines have rarely registered as contributors to the controversy" (247). But those interested in the heresy should also consider the evidence presented in the chapters "Books" and "Education," which present details of the ties between monastic houses and Oxford that have implications for our picture of the ways that these issues may have been debated there and how they may have been received by the monks as well. Most intriguingly, the chapter "Classicism" argues for a "connection between the cultivation of classical eloquence and orthodox preaching" (216). Indeed, one wishes that these connections had been spelled out in particular, though perhaps this is work for another book or a challenge to be taken up by other scholars.

NICOLE LASSAHN, *Loyola University Chicago*.

BOURDUA, LOUISE. *The Franciscans and Art Patronage in Late Medieval Italy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. xiii + 242 pp. \$85.00 (cloth).

Franciscan patronage, a phenomenon with spiritual, social, economic, and artistic resonances, hugely influential in late medieval Europe, forms the core of this book by Louise Bourdua. While the volume's title suggests a treatment on an Italian scale, in fact the book concentrates on the Veneto and focuses on three case studies: the pictorial decoration of San Fermo Maggiore at Verona; the sculptured façade of San Lorenzo, Vicenza; and the series of painted programs that were executed for the Santo in Padua—extending from the intervention of a Giottesque workshop in the early Trecento to the end of the century and including two chapels by Altichiero, as well as the Chapel of the Blessed Luca Belludi, painted by Giusto di Menabuoi.

Consideration of the documentary evidence, often enviably copious, concerning these monuments in conjunction with iconographic analyses allows the author to assess the role of the order in these projects. Friars could fill a variety of roles, depending on circumstances. They might act as financial administrators in parallel with lay donors. Another possibility was to act as program advisers, inclined to emphasize Franciscan themes, together with the more familial requirements preferred by the lay donors. At times a direct role as executants is indicated, as artists or assistants, in the manner of Jacopo Torriti in the Lateran apse mosaic at the end of the thirteenth century.

Such a variegated field is not easily reducible to an easy uniformity. This unsurprising conclusion should not detract from the analyses contained in the

book, which ultimately portrays a series of very important episodes, too often regarded in isolation, and here justifiably linked through an examination of the varying extents to which they are marked by Franciscan patronage. If the decoration of San Fermo at Verona is most easily comparable to Assisi, the chapter on the chapel dedicated to Luca Belludi provides the most tangible evidence of the "localization" of Franciscan artistic patronage, with a powerful emphasis on its civic relevance. It thus provides a key to Paduan history leading from the liberation of Padua from Ezzelino da Romano's yoke until the celebration of the hegemony of the Da Carrara family.

A consideration of patronage is not a stylistic history, nor indeed an iconographic one. Nevertheless, at times the reader suffers from the absence of more precise visual analysis. I shall take only one example, San Fermo. The Trecento core of the decoration on the choir arch, transept, and nave is an extensive program that largely obliterated the thirteenth-century decoration that preceded it. To understand the interrelationship of the Trecento cycles, it is important to recognize the extent of the project. A cycle evidently derived from Bonaventure's *Legenda Maior* seems to be directly associable with Assisi; yet the reader is not told whether the scenes of the life of Francis follow wholly, or only partially, the iconography of the Assisi Legend and is in consequence unable to assess their significance for the development of the iconography of St. Francis in the Veneto. Furthermore, various episodes have been added, such as the Martyrdom of Franciscans at Thana, an iconographic theme immediately associable with Ambrogio Lorenzetti's frescoes in San Francesco at Siena. Were the donors, Guglielmo da Castelbarco or Daniele Gusmerio, whose portraits appear on the triumphal arch, in some way responsible for these additions? Was the same workshop responsible, or are there other, more plausible explanations? These are important questions bearing on the self-presentation of the order and the relationship to authoritative models at Assisi and Siena. Given the lack of documentary sources, dating of the Thana episode and the Franciscan scenes can be achieved only by stylistic judgment. The same is true for the chronological coherence of the donor portraits and the remainder of the painted decoration. The photographs are of poor quality and unhelpful, being often difficult to read. In short, essential elements for the resolution of the problem are missing, for the writer neither explains clearly enough nor proposes a plausible answer.

The book is best to be regarded as a significant stage in the investigation of Franciscan patronage within the framework of Veneto society, and it is clear that the author could add much on the subject. A more inclusive bibliography, together with a more precise investigative focus, would certainly produce very interesting and comprehensive future results.

SERENA ROMANO, *Université de Lausanne*.

NATION, MARK THIESSEN. *John Howard Yoder: Mennonite Patience, Evangelical Witness, Catholic Convictions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006. xxiii+211 pp. \$20.00 (paper).

It seems that John Howard Yoder is destined to be remembered as the author of the *Politics of Jesus*. Consideration of his work is likely to remain limited to his defense of Christian pacifism against the antipacifist polemics of Reinhold Niebuhr and others. Such, at any rate, is Mark Thiessen Nation's concern.

Indeed, his anxiety about these matters is perhaps the most striking thing about this book. In light of this worry, Nation's task is to rescue the legacy of Yoder from such a narrow appreciation of his work. Though no doubt profoundly influenced by Yoder's arguments in support of Christian pacifism, he seeks to demonstrate that there is much more to Yoder than the book for which he is best known. He sets out to show that Yoder's "politics of Jesus" is merely one small part of a larger, more complex whole that was articulated with "remarkable consistency" (189) over the course of a forty-year career of wide-ranging theological conversation.

For Nation, this "more" is best captured by the recognition that Yoder's convictions were profoundly catholic and that they were given expression in the context of ecumenical engagements to which he dedicated much of his life. In short, Nation seeks to demonstrate that Yoder was an ecumenical thinker first and only a defender of Christian pacifism because of a determination to follow his catholic convictions through to their proper ends. In this respect, it must be noted that the subtitle is significantly misleading. Though Nation provides a detailed discussion of Yoder's "Mennonite heritage," he does not significantly address the theme of "Mennonite patience" and gives equally scant attention to the category of "Evangelical witness." More than anything else, Nation's contribution is an attempt to demonstrate the ecumenical character of Yoder's work.

"Demonstrate" is the right word to stress here. Nation's argument unfolds as a series of synopses of some of Yoder's key works, which are paired with summaries of lesser-known articles or unpublished memoranda and letters. Too often, his discussion is not so much an interpretation of Yoder's work as it is a rather straightforward repetition and recounting of what Yoder said. Nation is at his best when responding to certain common caricatures of Yoder's work, such as the assumption that Yoder had no concern for effectiveness and defended social irresponsibility or that he was a narrowly Mennonite thinker. Armed with an arsenal of citations, Nation helpfully supplies a list of textual examples in order to demonstrate that these sorts of claims can arise only out of a rather careless reading of Yoder's work. Unfortunately, however, any sense of engagement with Yoder's work, whether critical or otherwise, is all but non-existent. This is most glaringly apparent in the conclusion, where a handful of criticisms of Yoder's work are considered. For example, Nation writes that he wishes that Yoder had read more philosophy and political theory (198). He does not, however, indicate what sort of political philosophy he wishes Yoder might have read (Rawls? Wolin? Deleuze? Said?). Nor does he offer any suggestions that indicate what difference this might have made for Yoder's work.

To be sure, Nation is more familiar with Yoder's overall body of writings than anyone else is. He is, as Stanley Hauerwas notes in the foreword, essentially a collector. But his archival sensibilities are simultaneously the strength and weakness of this book. At times, his familiarity with the Yoder archive can be illuminating, such as his discussion of an unpublished lecture on the emerging field of conflict transformation. But beyond his demonstration of an encyclopedic command of the Yoder canon, Nation's desire to record Yoder's contributions is unaccompanied by an attempt to do anything with it.

Finally, it is worth reflecting on how best to describe this book. On the face of it, it appears as if it were an intellectual biography. It begins with a biographical sketch that attempts to situate Yoder's work in his Mennonite heritage, his education at Goshen College, and his early years in Europe with the Mennonite

Central Committee. But in the end, it strikes me that this book is not so much an intellectual biography as it is a testimony. It is in essence a tribute to Yoder by someone whose life was decisively transformed, both intellectually and personally, through his encounter with Yoder's work, a claim that Nation makes explicitly in the introduction and repeats throughout the book. In this regard, it is significant that the two authors most frequently cited by Nation, James McClendon and Stanley Hauerwas, are frequently mentioned as claiming to have been similarly impacted by Yoder. But this testimonial stance is perhaps most evident in the very rhetorical style of Nation's writing itself. Accordingly, this book is much less about John Howard Yoder than it is an account of what it is about Yoder that changed Nation's life.

CHRIS K. HUEBNER, *Canadian Mennonite University*.

WIGGINS, DAPHNE C. *Righteous Content: Black Women's Perspectives of Church and Faith*. New York: New York University Press, 2005. 229 pp. \$42.00 (cloth).

Few scholars have taken the time to make female members of black churches the subject of sociological research. In *Righteous Content: Black Women's Perspectives of Church and Faith*, Daphne Wiggins captures voices normally taken for granted: the voices of African American female laity.

Based on fieldwork, surveys, and semistructured interviews, the book reveals a complex representation of thirty-eight African American churchwomen from two congregations (one Baptist and one Church of God in Christ). Wiggins continues her earlier work to deepen research emphasis on African Americans, gender, and religiosity. She makes use of themes that appear in Evelyn Higginbotham's *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), such as African American women's church participation, women's group agency against racism, and women's theological perspectives.

In the book's first three chapters, Wiggins captures the skill of these women's negotiation of religious identity, spiritual discernment, and social action. Readers are presented with snapshots of the women's syncretic beliefs: beliefs formed in their struggle for survival and freedom in institutions that are sometimes ambivalent about their presence. An example of this is the women's expressed ambiguity toward the accountability and sexual ethics of male pastors coupled with their theological views of pastors as ordained by God (54–60). Although Scripture was cited by the women as a foremost religious authority, the author relates contemporary African American women's religiosity in practice to a broader process of theological meaning making that includes biblical interpretation, religious experiences, social belonging, local community engagement, and extrachurch sources such as television, the Internet, volunteer political/social organizations, and new faith movements.

Chapters 4 and 5 shift to discussions of the mission, labor, and leadership of the congregations Wiggins studied. The congregations selected by Wiggins are contextually aware congregations. They provide services to the wider community, such as financial assistance, drug rehabilitation programs, and food for the homeless, as part of their commitment to the work of the church. The distinction between church work and the work of the church demonstrates how churches can also be institutions of labor-intensive engagement for women laity, although women may have limited involvement in official church polity and

leadership. These women were not bound to ideologies opposing women clergy; however, they did not express a collective desire to advocate for gender-inclusive clerical leadership (132).

Readers may recognize what is not present in this study—mainly questions about the impact of external forces on these congregations, such as the declining membership of mainline black churches, America's growing religious diversity, the influx of immigrants into African American communities, and the rise of commuter congregations as more black churches move from the inner city to the suburbs. Still, growing tensions between the theological commitments of prosperity gospel and mainline black Protestant denominations are addressed with candid assessments of the challenge privatized spirituality presents to public advocacy for justice and social transformation.

In her conclusion, Wiggins offers several recommendations for the future of the black church. Her suggestions include the development of better pastoral care options for women and the need for a "well-constructed sexual ethic" within the black church (172). However, Wiggins's call to "regard gender as a defining principle of society and women's social experience" (174) obscures other defining aspects of African American women's identity and the intersectionality of class, gender, sexuality, and race. She recommends unified resistance of sexism in churches by men and women, yet readers are left to wonder in what ways the black church might help women to navigate their own sexuality and engage the politics of respectability simultaneously.

The author's discussion of African American churchwomen as closeted womanists seems to be a departure from a book that in prior chapters focuses on giving voice to women laity. Ascribing a womanist identity to persons who do not identify themselves as womanists is problematic. The slow appropriation of womanist and black theology into the everyday theological meaning making of black laypersons may point to differences in epistemology and to the exclusive nature of language from academic theological discourses.

Wiggins's insights as an experienced clergywoman and trained sociologist add texture to the study of African American church women's religiosity. Though the methodology presented in the book is problematic and the study is not extensive, this book is worth reading and may offer future opportunities for analysis in the fields of sociology, religion and culture, womanist theology, and black theology.

ELONDA CLAY, *Chicago, Illinois.*

STARK, RODNEY. *The Rise of Mormonism*. Edited by REID L. NEILSON. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. xi+173 pp. \$39.50 (cloth).

This is an extensively edited collection of sociologist Rodney Stark's published essays. Each essay interprets Mormonism or applies the models derived from that interpretation to a study of religion generally. The essays cover a variety of topics but are largely concerned with explaining how new religious movements survive and sometimes thrive in contemporary culture. While the editor's introduction emphasizes Stark's projections of Latter-day Saint (LDS) membership growth, Stark's own preface deems this incidental to the religious models he has deduced from Mormonism. The reader need not choose, however. Notwithstanding the book's title, the essays cover both dimensions of Stark's work.

After an initial summary, the first substantive chapter offers a model of revelation as occurring within and modulated by "Holy Families." Stark's evidence is wide-ranging in the extreme and, therefore, selective; that is, he identifies "amazing similarities among Joseph Smith, Muhammad, Jesus, and Moses" (27). Situating revelation as a "household religious production" advances Stark's larger proposition that revelation is a rational act by "normal people" (47, 55). Given the disciplinary frame, the search for rationality in religious activity informs all of these essays. Chapter 4 is the most direct appeal for a "rationality assumption" to "produce empirical predictions" in the study of religion (85). Chapter 5 applies the assumption to develop ten axioms predicting the positive effect of modernization and secularization on religious affiliation. Mormonism is Stark's case study. Referencing earlier work on the interaction between secularization and religious revival, Stark gathers data on the rate and locale of conversion to Mormonism as evidence that religion, even revealed religion, can thrive on both the modern and the secular.

The second disciplinary focus is manifest in the exclusive reliance on social phenomena to explain religious activity, especially conversion. Chapter 3 argues that the rational operation of social networks, not ideological appeal or group psychology, is the basis for radical growth in new religious movements. In making this point, Stark contests two conventional views of religious commitment. First, not deprivation but affiliation motivates conversion or inoculates one against reconversion: "Social networks make religious beliefs plausible" (63). Second, after laying the groundwork in a theory of religion and ethnicity as "overlapping investments" that facilitate religious affiliation, Stark rejects mass conversion as the necessary explanation for Christianity's early growth. He calculates that an annual rate of only 3.42 percent growth in a population of 1,000 adherents produces 6.3 million after 260 years, thus explaining the rapid increase in fourth-century Christianity. Again, Stark uses Mormonism's growth in its first two centuries as historical evidence that his calculations are not a mathematical abstraction. A much-expanded version of this 1980 essay was published for the general reader in *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal, Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1997).

In the last chapter, Stark addresses directly the issue of LDS growth by revisiting his much-criticized 1984 calculation that the then 5.6 million members of the LDS Church would, by 2080, increase to as many as 267.5 million but no less than 63.9 million adherents. He notes that in 2003, the last year for which data was available, LDS membership stood at 12 million, greater than both his projected low of 8.5 and high of 11.8 for that year. As indicated above, the significance of this fact, for Stark, lies not in the numbers themselves. Rather, they suggest that science may at last have a specimen capable of giving insight into enduring questions about religion generally. Mormonism's modern origins and continuing vitality, he argues, provide an opportunity to study the formation and evolution of a complex revelatory system, a study prohibited by the ancient origins of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.

This is a thought-provoking book, but one that is at times confusing and often repetitious. Its topical organization and effort to turn essays into chapters create redundancy and make the trajectory of Stark's thought difficult to follow. For example, chapter 5 "blends three essays" written over a ten-year period. Finally, the introduction does not situate Stark's work in the larger body of scholarship on the sociology of religion. Given the amount of criticism gener-

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ated by his writings, this leaves the reader reliant on Stark's own representations of the debate and its resolution. Nevertheless, for religious studies students, Stark's work provides a rich source for questioning the nature and evolution of religious communities, especially those founded on the idea of revelation, in a historically self-conscious world. Collecting his essays on this subject in a single volume makes accessible an important voice in the sociological study of religion.

KATHLEEN FLAKE, *Vanderbilt University*.

CAREY, PATRICK W. *Catholics in America: A History*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004. 290 pp. \$49.95 (cloth).

This book is a revision of the author's 1993 publication *The Roman Catholics* (Denominations in America Series [Westport, CT: Greenwood]). Like that volume, this one is divided into two sections, a historical narrative and a biographical dictionary of prominent Catholics. Readers familiar with *The Roman Catholics* can expect in this study the same clarity of prose, attention to detail, and balanced interpretation of historical events and actors. More concise than Jay P. Dolan's *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992) and more comprehensive than James T. Fisher's *Communion of Immigrants: A History of Catholics in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), Patrick Carey's history provides an excellent overview of American Catholicism that will interest both scholars and general audiences.

The omission of the word "Roman" from the title of this revised history is telling, as it reflects a subtle shift in emphasis from American Catholics' membership in a universal church to their citizenship in a diverse and democratic society. This is undoubtedly driven by the increased attention Carey gives to American Catholicism since the Second Vatican Council (1962–65). As Carey notes, Vatican II and its decrees, combined with a trend toward cultural change in the nation in general, placed new limits on ecclesiastical authority. In particular, U.S. Catholics' collective resistance to Pope Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae* (1968), which reaffirmed the church's prohibition of artificial means of birth control, represented a turning point. The formal protests launched against the encyclical by theologians and clergy members, as well as the widespread dissent of the vast majority of lay Catholics from its message (by 1977, 73 percent of U.S. Catholics believed they should be permitted to practice contraception), marked the first public questioning of the church's teaching authority in American Catholic history.

"Troubled Times" is the title of Carey's final and most provocative chapter, which covers the period between 1990 and 2003. From the opening sentences it is clear that "troubled" is an understatement to describe the last decade of the twentieth century and the early years of the twenty-first. Along with their fellow citizens, U.S. Catholics not only lived through national tragedies such as Columbine and 9/11 but also witnessed the devastation caused by violence and civil war overseas. In addition, the American Catholic community faced manifold internal problems, including the increasing alienation of Catholic women over controversial issues such as female ordination, a shortage of priests and religious, and the clergy sex-abuse scandal. As the most up-to-date chronicler of the American Catholic experience, Carey has the unenviable task of inter-

preting this last challenge, and he devotes over one-third of his final chapter to doing so. In an effort to provide background on the scandals, Carey occasionally sounds defensive, such as when he observes that the secular media neither appreciated nor presented the episcopal side of the story. He does show, however, that the church's effort to come to grips with the problem of priestly pedophilia far antedated the *Boston Globe's* 2002 exposé of the John Geoghan case.

Despite his focus on the specific American context, Carey never loses sight of U.S. Catholics' membership in a universal communion. His analysis of the recent history of the church emphasizes the U.S. bishops as advocates for peace and justice throughout the world, discussing, among their other initiatives, *The Challenge of Peace* (1983), *A Call to Solidarity with Africa* (2001), and the "Statement on Iraq" (2002). Carey admits that his historical account of contemporary events "suffers from the historian's nearness" to them but, overall, he rises to the occasion in his frank discussion of the domestic and international challenges that the church will continue to face well into the third millennium.

The biographical section of the book is considerably shorter than the "Dictionary of Roman Catholic Leaders" that he included in *The Roman Catholics*. What was striking about the latter list was his expansive definition of leadership: 20 percent of the entries were women, which made it pioneering in 1993. It is disappointing that this new "Biographical Dictionary" reverts to a more conventional understanding of leadership, with most of the entries devoted to priests or bishops and only a scant 10 percent devoted to women. Nevertheless, the biographies that he does include are well written, and this resource will, like its predecessor, prove very useful for students of American Catholicism.

KATHLEEN SPROWS CUMMINGS, *University of Notre Dame*.

BROWN, CHRISTOPHER LESLIE. *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism*.

Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA, 2006. x+480 pp. \$55.00 (cloth); \$22.50 (paper).

In its earliest years, historical writing on abolition tackled the question of causation without much difficulty. Thus, British abolitionists and their like-minded compatriots marked the end of the slave trade and emancipation as a triumph of "Christian altruism" over economic self-interest. This consensus reigned for more than a century until Eric Williams (*Capitalism and Slavery* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994]) argued for an alternative genealogy that stressed the ascendancy of free-market ideology and the economic decline of the plantation economies in the Caribbean. Though subsequent historians successfully challenged some of the key assumptions of the "Williams Thesis," others, mistrustful of a whiggish strain in abolitionist historiography, rearticulated the causative factors by highlighting, for instance, the congruence between bourgeois social relations and antislavery ideology or by arguing for a change in "cognitive style" caused by the intensification and extension of the capitalist market.

In contrast to previous scholarship, Christopher Leslie Brown's *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* argues that the development of abolitionism "did not follow inevitably from enlightened sensibilities, social change, or a

shift in economic interests" (1) but from a deeply contingent set of historical circumstances in which individuals found ways to traverse the gulf between the perception of a moral injustice and the political action needed to rectify it. In tracing the movement from perception to action, Brown's *Moral Capital* disentangles two related, yet conceptually distinct, problems in abolitionist historiography: the process by which slavery came to be perceived as a moral problem and the process by which individuals were mobilized to destroy slavery. *Moral Capital* clarifies the contours of both problems and provides a useful template for future research. What emerges in *Moral Capital* is a logically structured, lucidly written, and well-researched narrative that tells us much about the complex historical setting out of which the early British abolitionist movement emerged. However, because *Moral Capital* ends in 1787, with the establishment of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, Brown does not systematically explore a third major facet of abolitionist historiography—the process by which those in power fashioned a legislative response to destroy slavery ("Explaining Abolition" [*Journal of Social History* 24 (2): 371–78]).

Moral Capital examines an impressive array of primary sources (letters, speeches, meeting minutes, and political pamphlets) and a secondary literature on the historical subfields of empire, religious history, political economy, and intellectual history in order to grapple with four central conceptual problems. First, Brown shows that slavery had long existed in the minds of Anglo colonials as an abstract moral wrong. However, because of its colonial foundations and its virtually unquestioned economic value to the British Empire, slavery could not and did not generate sustained antislavery initiatives. Second, Brown argues that the abstract wrong of slavery was transformed by the polarizing rhetoric of political enslavement that emerged during the American Revolution. According to Brown, the revolution was a crucial catalyst as the rhetorical battle waged between Britain and her soon-to-be former colonies thoroughly politicized the institution of slavery and prompted serious introspection in Britain on the question of empire. The American Revolution is central to his argument; he argues that "without the American Revolution it would have been difficult for an antislavery movement to develop as a national movement" (464). Third, Brown claims that the politicization of slavery alone was not enough to transform antislavery into abolitionism. Rather, he maintains, those concerned needed ways to address the concerns raised by the American Revolution. Thus, solutions to the problem of slavery had to be imagined and proffered even if, like the proposed colonization of Sierra Leone, they were doomed to failure.

Finally, Brown argues that abolitionism as a movement could succeed only when individuals and groups created institutional structures through which they mounted sustained political campaigns against the slave trade. Here, Brown introduces familiar historical characters in the drama of abolitionism: Evangelical Christians and Quakers. He paints abolitionists in all their complexity by arguing for their interestedness in both abolition and other compelling reform campaigns generated by changes at home and abroad. Abolitionists joined their work against the slave trade to other reform movements because of the "moral capital" abolitionism generated. In the context of the American Revolution and the imperial crisis set off in its wake, abolitionism in 1787 became a powerful source of moral capital able, on its own, to legitimate action in the world (547). Abolitionism, as a political force, emerged not simply because Evangelicals and Quakers were committed to ending the slave trade

but also because no other reform project of the era had attained a comparable moral status, a status that could serve multiple ends. In capturing the complexity of abolitionism's development, *Moral Capital* is a significant study that sheds new light not only on antislavery and abolitionism but also on eighteenth-century political history, the American Revolution, and religious history. CHRISTOPHER P. TODD, *Chicago, Illinois*.

THOMPSON, DAVID M. *Baptism, Church, and Society in Modern Britain: From the Evangelical Revival to Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*. Studies in Christian History and Thought. Bletchley: Paternoster, 2005. 203 pp. £19.99 (paper).

This book is a revision and expansion of David Thompson's Hulsean Lectures at the University of Cambridge for the academic year 1983–84. For an area of Christian belief that has loomed so large in theological debates and exhibited such a significant, though ambiguous, hold over popular consciousness, baptismal theology has received relatively little systematic historical attention. In order to redress this unfortunate neglect, Thompson has provided the first comprehensive historical study of baptism in modern Britain. With its publication, he has moved the analysis of baptism beyond snapshot assessments by offering a broad consideration of both baptismal practice and theory from the eighteenth to the twentieth century.

In Thompson's judgment, baptismal practice and theology in Britain has changed in striking ways over the last two centuries. First, baptismal theology has evolved from a divisive issue into a basis for cooperation, and Christians from all denominations have demonstrated a growing receptivity to sacramental views of the rite. Second, the distinction between church and society has sharpened, and the gap between the concerns of learned theologians engaged in controversy and those expressed by individuals in popular practice has widened.

Thompson discusses most of the main traditions of Christian reflection on baptism in Britain. He considers all the major denominations and gives due weight to the way in which broader movements such as evangelicalism, Anglo-Catholicism, liberalism, and ecumenism have shaped current debate. Yet, it is surprising that such a wide survey does not include a discussion of charismatic or Pentecostal beliefs about baptism. These traditions may be marginal to the story that Thompson has told, but their inclusion might also have enriched his discussion in surprising ways.

In any case, it is Thompson's sensitive exploration of popular beliefs and practice that furnishes some of his most stimulating interpretive insights regarding religion's relationship to society. Thompson finds the secularization thesis unhelpful. In place of simplistic models of popular religious decline, he favors models stressing adaptation and continuity. Following the recent work of Sarah Williams, Thompson stresses the survival of beliefs during migration from rural to urban contexts. With regard to this new urban context, Williams has shown that the meanings of rites of passage are constructed around communal systems of symbolic meaning and are not simply determined by social structures. Thompson finds Williams's emphasis on systems of symbolic meaning helpful in understanding popular approaches to baptism, and he puts it to good use.

The seriousness with which Thompson treats popular beliefs has a practical

theological consequence that surfaces near the end of his narrative. Thompson contends that "the understanding of the relationship between theology and popular religion needs to change, both for theologians as well as social historians" (162). In short, just as Thompson wants historians and sociologists to take the content of popular beliefs seriously without explaining them away in terms of an appeal to social structure, he also wants theologians to move beyond their dismissive stance. Thompson wants the church to engage with popular beliefs in a more responsible fashion. He concludes his narrative with a challenge to theologians. Regarding the persistent attachment of irregular churchgoers to baptism for themselves and their children, Thompson asks, "How does the kind of religious belonging represented by much popular religion especially, but not only, in baptism relate to the Church's teaching and expectations? As yet, there is little sign that these issues are being seriously addressed by theologians. Yet systematic theology cannot escape history" (188). The gap between popular practice and learned debate is an issue of concern to Thompson, and he challenges theologians to give it weighty consideration. Moreover, this theological and pastoral engagement with popular belief is a vital antidote to ghetto or sectarian ecclesiology, which Thompson warns against.

Thompson clearly believes in the primacy of unity and the importance of preventing baptism from becoming a divisive issue again. Furthermore, he has shown the historic ways in which popular belief and learned controversy have moved along separate paths. This is a state of affairs that he would like to see changed. It is not the historian's job to provide a complete blueprint for securing such a vision, but for those who share his theological concerns and others who do not, Thompson has provided a probing historical analysis that will serve as an indispensable guide to all future historical and theological reflection on the question of baptism. Scholars interested in the serious historical study of theological beliefs can be glad that Thompson's considered judgments and perceptive analysis are finally available to a wider readership.

TODD M. THOMPSON, *University of Cambridge*.

HOWARD, THOMAS ALBERT. *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. xiv+468 pp. \$135.00 (cloth).

This detailed historical study by Thomas A. Howard examines the influence as well as the fluctuating status of Protestant theology in modern German higher education. Though the issues are traced back to earlier European settings, the book's main focus is on the University of Berlin, the premier nineteenth-century university of Germany. By design, the book is not framed by the "history of ideas" (tracing what various theologians thought or taught) as much as it is by institutional debates regarding the rationale for a theological faculty and how this relates to policies of the Prussian government. Schleiermacher appears mainly not as theologian but as a founding member of the theological faculty, and Harnack not as historian of dogma so much as the highly articulate defender of the prerogative of retaining faculties of theology in state institutions. Overall, however, theological ideas are never absent. The book shows Howard's admirable respect for the need to balance ideas and material interests, as seen in his *Religion and the Rise of Historicism: W. M. L. de Wette, Jacob Burckhardt, and*

the Theological Origins of Nineteenth-Century Historical Consciousness (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Like that book, this study lets the past tell its own complex story, while encouraging “historians of modern Europe and Germany to take theology more seriously as a subject for historical analysis” (9).

Following chapter 1, which sets the stage for the overall argument, chapters 2–5 stand as virtual self-contained monographs. Chapter 2, “*Sacra Facultas* and the Coming of German Modernity,” treats the rise of the eighteenth-century suspicion of universities as medieval and thus irreconcilable with the modern state. The universities of Halle (founded in 1694) and Göttingen (1737) are presented as notable antecedents of Prussia’s pedagogical-political ambition in post-Napoleonic times, while Kant’s attack on the prerogatives of the theological faculty (*Strife of the Faculties*) did not preclude theology from playing a formative role alongside philosophy at the University of Berlin.

In treating the founding of the University of Berlin (1810) in chapter 3, “Theology, *Wissenschaft*, and the Founding of the University of Berlin,” Howard covers the pivotal role of Schleiermacher, working at the behest of Wilhelm von Humboldt, in negotiating the intrigues of the state and of rival educational theorists (e.g., the philosophers Fichte and Schelling). That a soon-to-be illustrious new university came into being in a Prussia still struggling to recover from the wars of Napoleon owed much to the perseverance and statecraft of Humboldt as well as to a circle of distinguished civil servants and founding scholars at the university.

In chapter 4, “An Erastian Modernity? Church, State, and Education in Early Nineteenth-Century Prussia,” Howard treats issues of church and state in the era of Prussian reform after 1806 (led by Stein and Hardenberg) and in the cultural ministry of Karl von Altenstein (1817–40), who “steadily sought to extend the logic of the *Kulturstaat* in the sphere of education and religion” (240). The account will provoke reflection among readers who wrestle with the place of the academic study of religion, let alone theology, in the universities of the United States.

Having firmly established the university’s midcentury nationalist and political ethos, chapter 5, “*Theologia* between Science and the State,” parts with the book’s general time line to take up facets of the university over the entire period, 1810–1918. These sections treat, respectively, the rise and fall of “theological encyclopedia,” historical commemorations celebrated within the university, and the steady flow of foreigners as a result of the Berlin university’s international prestige. The symbolic vignette of Harnack defending the study of theology in 1919 against the general science of religions (a debate that had been inaugurated by Fichte) rounds out the contours of the book.

In sixteen pages of concluding musings (“Janus Gazing”), Howard reflects more broadly on theology and the life of the mind, ranging from the patristic era—when the state had no say in such matters—to the impasse between Karl Barth and his teacher, Harnack, who could not understand a single sentence of his impassioned former pupil. Though Howard does not say so explicitly, one is led to suspect that Harnack’s institutional victory for theology was in some respects Pyrrhic. Historic tensions between church and state in Germany ensure that a degree of dissonance will inhere within a state-sponsored system for preparing pastors and teachers. At the very least, this extensive study of Protestant theology within the German university documents the belief (ex-

pressed in chap. 1) that a decided “pathos of theology” arises in the effort of *theologia* to be a *scientia*.

RICHARD CROUTER, *Carleton College*.

DI BLASI, FULVIO. *God and the Natural Law: A Rereading of Thomas Aquinas*. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's, 2006. xxi+264 pp. \$37.50 (cloth).

As its subtitle suggests, this book offers a rereading of Aquinas's doctrine of natural law, focusing on the interconnections between natural law and the order of nature, on the one hand, and the will of God as the author of nature, on the other. Di Blasi proposes his interpretation as a correction to what he regards as flawed readings put forward by the neoclassical natural lawyers, led by John Finnis, and the neo-Aristotelian interpretation of Henry Veatch. More specifically, the neoclassical account of natural law is inadequate (both as a reading of Aquinas and on its merits) because it attempts to ground moral norms in the operations of practical reason alone. Thus, it proposes a theory of natural law that is both “atheistic,” in that it does not depend on the will of God, and “without nature,” insofar as it is expressly disassociated from the order of nature as discerned through theoretical reason (3–4). Veatch's neo-Aristotelian interpretation is more satisfactory, precisely because Veatch does recognize that the natural law is grounded in “the experiential knowledge of *human nature*” (4). However, Veatch falls short because he too argues that the knowledge and normative force of the natural law do not depend on knowledge of God. Di Blasi argues, in contrast, that the natural law as Aquinas understands it takes its normative content from the intelligible ordering of nature and draws its obligatory force from the recognition that this order stems from the will of God.

Di Blasi prefaces his own interpretation of Aquinas's account of the natural law with an extended criticism of the neoclassical interpretation, together with a briefer critique of Veatch (with whom he apparently has more sympathy). In order to do so, he places the neoscholastic account within the context of contemporary analytic philosophy, especially the philosophy of law, in such a way as to draw out the motivations and limitations of this approach. The resulting critique is illuminating and persuasive. As he correctly observes, the neoscholastics are forced by the constraints of their conception of practical reason to deny its essential elements, as Aquinas understands these—namely, its orientation toward one unitary end (happiness) and its dependence on natural criteria for goodness derived from this end and on the correlative hierarchical ordering of goods. The resultant theory of moral judgment is not only a distortion of Aquinas's views; considered on its merits, it cannot account for the cogency and nonarbitrariness of practical reason.

Di Blasi's positive account of Aquinas's theory of the natural law is less persuasive. He makes a very good case that the natural law is grounded in the intelligible order of nature—so far following along the same broad lines as Veatch, Ralph MacInerny, and others. However, he goes on to say that in addition, the obligatory or coercive force of the natural law necessarily implies both that it expresses God's will and that it is known as such. This is a remarkably strong claim, since it presupposes that everyone knows that God exists and recognizes the precepts of the natural law to be divine commands. But while Aquinas does hold that everyone does know something that is objectively God—

namely, happiness—he goes on to say that this is not tantamount to knowledge of God as God, since it is possible to be mistaken about the objective reality of one's final end (ST I 2.1 *ad* 1). More generally, Di Blasi's argument depends on establishing a universal, implicit knowledge of God, "implicit" being understood as more or less equivalent to "latent" or "unconscious" in the modern, Freudian sense. To this reviewer, at least, this appears to go well beyond what Aquinas says and to stand in tension with what he does say about the extent and the limits of natural knowledge of God.

Even so, Di Blasi offers much of value. In particular, in addition to his acute critical comments on contemporaries, he offers a brief but sympathetic and subtle interpretation and defense of Suarez, whose position seems closer to his own than does Aquinas's. It would be interesting to see him develop this re-reading at more length in a later volume, but, in any case, the editors of St. Augustine's Press are to be thanked for introducing the work of a perceptive and original thinker to an English-speaking audience.

JEAN PORTER, *University of Notre Dame*.

PANIKKAR, RAMON. *The Experience of God: Icons of the Mystery*. Translated by Joseph Cunneen. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006. 144 pp. \$16.00 (paper).

This small, elegant book began as lectures for "theology professors at the Benedictine monastery of Silos [Spain]" (7). Though expecting a Christian audience, Pannikar reminds us that he also has written widely on Hinduism and very much hopes to exclude no one interested in the mystery of our existence. *The Experience of God* is serenely wise, flowing with seeming ease across centuries, cultures, languages, religions, with a calming effect facilitated by Joseph Cunneen's graceful translation and Richard Kathmann's lithographs. There are no notes, very few quotations, and hardly a reference to anything written in the past two hundred years. It reads as a master's final discourse—though, given how prolific and vital Panikkar has been for so long, it would happily be unwise to imagine he has no more to say.

The book is divided into four chapters, progressing in specificity. First, "Speaking of God" explains in various ways the limits of words, the need for speech arising from and returning to silence, and humility in the face of the ever-greater living mystery of God. Second, "The Experience of God" ably parses experience and "experience," the relationships among faith, acts of faith, and particular belief expressions. Since we cannot once and for all "experience God" or ever make God a describable object, we must keep trying partial approaches, while yet honoring others' experiments too. Third, "Christian Experience of God" (not "*the* Christian experience," since there is no single such experience) negotiates dualist, monist, and nondualist conceptions of the world and explores Christian thinking on God and Jesus, Christ and Spirit; understood properly, such words do not bind us but powerfully free us for the sake of mystery. Three texts illumine the way: "It is in him that we have life, and move, and exist," "No one has ever seen God," and "So that God may be all in all." Fourth, "Privileged Places of the Experience of God" identifies events and moments ("love," "thou," "joy," "evil," "suffering," etc.). Oddly, no geographical places are mentioned, as if universality depends also on the absence of places that can be named or visited. Oddly, too, it is here that Panikkar gives the single long quotation in the book, over a page (in German and English)

from Angelus Silesius's *The Cherubic Pilgrim*. A brief epilogue draws the whole together, evoking *Christus totus*, divinization, emptiness, the third eye, cosmotheandric experience, panentheism complemented by panenpsychism and panencosmism, the divine *perichoresis* drawing us into God: "The experience of God is the experience of the Mystery that governs our lives from both within and without" (141).

This is a lovely book to read—and difficult to review. Given the stature, intensity, and insightfulness of Panikkar and his book's gentle, ruminative nature, it would be mean-spirited, tone-deaf even to try dissecting his claims on language and experience, to scrutinize his use of Christian and Vedanta tradition, or to debate what Shankara and Aquinas said and meant. Not that he is careless—quite the opposite—but brief citations may appear more authoritative than they are, while enlisting prolific writers so succinctly aligns them with views they might only partially accept. Perhaps *The Experience of God* asks simply for meditative reflection, without debate (but then too, without theological assent), a reader's journey into mysteries often obscured by the words we use in making God one more object of words. By Panikkar's words, we might thus learn to be more playful in our speech about God.

Still better might be to ponder "The Experience of Panikkar" twice over. First, while he is present in his turns of phrase, insights, and erudite allusions in multiple languages, he is also thereby concealed, as if "Panikkar" too cannot be objectified. Perhaps finding the author does not matter, and we are to find him only by his word. Fair enough, but in an era when autobiography matters—because it is compellingly local, because it offers resistance to aggressive theorizing, because confession uncovers bias—Panikkar's erasure of the personal does not satisfy; we expect more of contemporary mystics than of the ancients. Indeed, our interest in Panikkar himself also has to do with his own story, a life incarnating the encounter/s of India and the West. Second, we can also, perhaps not too impertinently, ask whether *The Experience of God* is all about his own experience of God—perhaps rooted in his realization that everything he knows and writes has failed to capture his encounter with God? Knowing more of that experience would aid us in deciphering our own journeys—with more or less faith, wonder, silence, perhaps even with more concrete experiences of a Divine Person who does become visible in particular words, forms, places, persons.

FRANCIS X. CLOONEY, *Harvard University*.

O'DONOVAN, OLIVER. *The Ways of Judgment*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006. 330 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).

Once again Oliver O'Donovan has given us an outstanding work of political theology, displaying impressive erudition, keen insight, and critical challenge far beyond the norm. *The Ways of Judgment* is the promised sequel to *The Desire of the Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Whereas the earlier volume sought to explore the "correspondence" between theological and political concepts from the theological side, the current volume focuses more on the political side. O'Donovan's recent effort is an attempt to illuminate the art of practical reasoning in the political realm, albeit from an unapologetic Christian perspective (x). *The Ways of Judgment*, in other words, is an instance of faith seeking political understanding.

As suggested by the title, O'Donovan contends that "the authority of secular government resides in the practice of judgment" (3). According to O'Donovan, such judgment is "*an act of moral discrimination that pronounces upon a preceding act or existing state of affairs to establish a new public context*" (7). The ways of political judgment, then, have to do first with moral judgment, which constitutes an effort to resolve moral conflicts and ambiguities within a social body. Political authority is not the product of governments or rulers, but it is recognized by rulers and governments in defending against the "wrong" and preserving the "right" of a people, which secures a limited notion of the common good, for no one can "declare comprehensively what is right to do" (58). O'Donovan's most basic point, which is at least as old as the ancient Greek philosophers, is that ethics and politics are intimately connected, and political authority emerges out of the moral life of a people.

Consequently, political judgment creates a public context in which governmental institutions are built and function according to their ability to enact what is "right" and are not, as Max Weber holds, simply based on the state's legitimate claim to coercion and the maintenance of social order or, as certain political liberals claim, a government's procedural efficiency. Political judgments are assessed first and foremost in light of their truthfulness. As O'Donovan puts it, "A well-made judgment is a statement that is true, and *as such* a deed that is effective" (9).

A government's authority, therefore, resides in true political judgment, and this not only comports with the biblical account, O'Donovan argues, but is possible because of the God to whom the Bible witnesses. "The demands of political authority," writes O'Donovan, "take us beyond our natural social responses and instincts, and direct us towards an aspect of our human destiny" (134), which is "the hidden future to which God summons human destiny" (135). On this score, O'Donovan is no friend of the sort of political liberalism that holds that the rule of law is nothing more than a social construction and hence has no recourse to that which "transcends" the social and indeed the political (75–77). Such a form of political liberalism is "the illusion of human rule to sovereignty" (4).

Indeed, the political form of our God-directed destiny is rooted not in human sovereignty but in the Christ event. The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ repositions political action, removing it from any pretension of sovereignty—the "desacralization" of politics, as O'Donovan has it in *The Desire of the Nations*—for as the crucified and resurrected One, only Christ is Lord, both in terms of this age (the *saeculum*) and the age to come (5). In the wake of the Christ event, political judgment is limited, as noted above, to the execution of right. By limiting its authority to the judgment of right, the political community, or the state, wittingly or unwittingly, serves Christ and his church in at least two ways. First, the state serves Christ by providing and preserving a just ordering of society according to the judgment of right. This just ordering of society allows the church to pursue its vocation, namely, the preaching of the Gospel. Second, by limiting its notion of the good to the judgment of right, the state creates the space for various communities, such as the church, to develop and act upon their comprehensive notion of the good. In both cases, the political act of judgment serves Christ by allowing for the mission of the church.

Moreover, it is the mission of the church that helps to secure the role of the state. In fact, to the degree that the state loses sight of the mission of the

church, the state becomes idolatrous and even demonic (77). For those familiar with O'Donovan's work, we are presented once again with an appeal for some type of Christendom. Citing Augustine, O'Donovan seems to hold "that there can be no 'right' in a society that does not acknowledge the right of God" or at least exhibit "deference to the transcendent" (76). No society can present the truth of the right unless it acknowledges that "truth" and "right" are not created by its own means but provided for from without, so to speak, and preferably in reference to "God as the sovereign authority of any human society" (77). Unfortunately, such reference is not the case with our current political allegiance to "late-liberalism" (76). Late liberalism, O'Donovan suggests, shuns natural law, individual moral conscience over majority rule, and the "spiritual capacities" of its members and religious humility, and, worst of all, it refuses to acknowledge God (75–77). But here, as in previous works, O'Donovan is confusing when clarity is most needed.

What exactly is O'Donovan asking of "late" liberalism, or any state polity for that matter? At the very least, O'Donovan is asking the state to defer, especially at critical junctures, to "the transcendent," and at most, to the God of Jesus Christ. In the end, if O'Donovan is seeking to chasten late political liberalism of its illusory sense of sovereignty, then it may be that all that is needed is something like Jeffrey Stout's notion of political life as, shall we say, democratic traditionalism (see Stout's *Democracy and Tradition* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004]), which seeks to put a political, moral, and even spiritual "check" on the masses. If that's the case, O'Donovan's appeal to God, the transcendent, and so forth, as well as Christendom, may be gratuitous. If, on the other hand, O'Donovan's notion of political judgment and appeal to Christendom is meant primarily for Christians, then there remain several theological problems.

In the final analysis, O'Donovan's *The Ways of Judgment* is surely one of the finest works in political theology of his generation (the other being *The Desire of the Nations*), if not the last century, and deserves a wide readership. If only the recent spate of works in political theology could be so theologically informed and rigorously argued, the state of political theology would be in good shape. We can only hope that O'Donovan has set the standard for future works of faith seeking political understanding.

TODD V. CIOFFI, *Villanova University*.

OAKLEY, FRANCIS. *Natural Law, Laws of Nature, Natural Rights: Continuity and Discontinuity in the History of Ideas*. New York: Continuum, 2005. 143 pp. \$34.95 (cloth).

This book consists of the revised text of the 2001 Curti Lectures in Intellectual History at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. As the title indicates, it focuses on the interconnections among and inconsistencies within the long-standing tradition of discourse on the natural law, considered as normative ideal or standard, and the laws of nature governing the regularities exhibited by the nonhuman world. At the same time, it exemplifies Francis Oakley's continuing fascination with "the internal interconnections and affinities among ideas . . . the logical pressures they are capable of exerting on the minds of those that think them" and, correlatively, with "the exploration of long-standing intellectual traditions" that by their very nature cut across contemporary disciplinary

boundaries (9). Thus, through the process of defending his interpretation of the natural law tradition, Oakley also mounts a defense of the project of intellectual history itself. This defense does not imply that continuities of discourse are necessarily rooted in a set of unitary, well-formed concepts that can be detached from their social context and analyzed accordingly. Similarly, the development of ideas is not sufficient, by itself, to account for the development and social impact of corresponding traditions of discourse. Nonetheless, we can identify more or less coherent ideas informing at least some traditions of discourse, and these do exhibit an inner logic, which has explanatory power. Discourses can, and sometimes do, reflect irreducible intellectual commitments, in other words, and, while these cannot do all the explanatory work, neither can they be altogether discounted. As Oakley acknowledges, these are controversial claims, especially in Anglophone circles, but they are once again beginning to enjoy credence. Oakley's rich and closely argued book makes a very strong case for the legitimacy of this kind of intellectual history.

The topic that he has chosen—the tradition of reflection on the natural law, seen in relation to laws of nature and natural rights—offers a particularly appropriate subject by which to show that an appropriately sophisticated intellectual history is both possible and fruitful. There would be little doubt that the natural law tradition reflects both long-standing continuities of discourse and conceptual ruptures; the questions are how these are to be construed and, more specifically, whether they reflect properly intellectual concerns, in addition to the social forces that are certainly in play. The distinctiveness of Oakley's argument lies in his construal of the interconnections among the relevant ideas—interconnections that, as he admits, are by no means simple or completely consistent but that can nonetheless be understood in terms of the development of an intellectual trajectory—or, to be more precise, two trajectories, because, on Oakley's view, “not one but two principal traditions of natural law thinking would be transmitted to the thinkers of early modern Europe” from the medieval period (25–26). The first of these, Neoplatonic or Aristotelian in origin, emphasized the intrinsic rationality and immanence of the natural law; the second emphasized its status as an obligatory law, dependent on the authority of a divine legislator and in that sense extrinsic. Medieval thinkers synthesized these two approaches, but their synthesis was always unstable. It began to come apart in the early modern period, at least partially under the pressure of “extra-philosophical commitments of biblical provenance, not least among them the alien insistence on the untrammelled freedom, transcendence, and omnipotence of God” (26)—commitments that led both the natural law and laws of nature to be conceived as extrinsic impositions, dependent on God's authority and opaque to rational analysis. Thus, modern traditions of reflection on natural law and scientific laws of nature reflect the same intellectual mind-set and have shaped each other, although in complicated and unsuspected ways. Finally, this line of analysis opens up a new way to frame recent debates on the origin and development of the idea of natural rights, much debated in recent scholarship.

It is impossible, in the compass of a brief review, to do justice to the details of Oakley's argument. While not persuasive in every detail (at least to this reviewer), Oakley's overall case for the intimate interconnections between moral and scientific thought is cogent and illuminating. By the same token, he amply demonstrates the possibilities and power of a certain kind of intellectual history. May we see many more books like this one.

JEAN PORTER, *University of Notre Dame*.

FORSTER, GREG. *John Locke's Politics of Moral Consensus*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xi+317 pp. \$75.00 (cloth).

Greg Forster has written a very good and timely book on the political theory of John Locke. It is very good because it is well researched, clearly written, and provocative in its discussion and analysis. It is timely because it reveals how much we have in common with Locke given the political context in which we live, plagued as it is with the threat of political instability in the face of moral and religious pluralism, and how much we might have to gain by again turning to Locke, "more or less the founder of political liberalism" (219), for guidance in these matters. Forster goes to great lengths to reclaim Locke from those who fail to grasp the integrated nature of his philosophical writings and who either embrace or dismiss him because they take him in half measures rather than engaging his thought as a coherent whole. By arguing for a Locke who is more systematic across his writings on epistemology, religion, and politics than is often realized or portrayed, Forster rescues Locke as a significant resource for contemporary political theory. I remain, however, less sanguine than Forster that the "moral consensus" Locke describes can serve as the foundation of social and political solidarity we seek under conditions of moral and religious pluralism today.

Much of Forster's concern in the book is to counter a tendency to separate Locke's political theory from his epistemology and his writings on religion. This tendency, he insists, fails to grasp the profound achievement of Locke in responding to the theoretical and practical problems of moral and religious pluralism. Forster pursues an ambitious project in which he revisits Locke's work on epistemology in order, finally, to show how it grounds a "comprehensive system of theology and politics" (7). Locke's "epistemology of limits" establishes a framework for achieving moral consensus around which a stable political order can be built in spite of profound disagreements on many moral and religious matters. The problem, as Forster recognizes, is that "people will generally do what they believe is morally right rather than what is approved by the political order, unless the political order is itself invested with moral legitimacy. Eventually, a political order unsupported by a moral theory will collapse under the weight of this problem" (4). The key, following Locke, is to get everyone to recognize the inherent limits of human knowledge while showing that some beliefs, both moral and religious, are more certain than others and so can serve as a common foundation in the quest to legitimize political authority.

As Forster puts the point, "Moral theory must have some way of establishing authoritative laws that society will enforce" (193). One strategy associated with modern political theory has been to overcome the challenges of religious diversity by secularizing the public sphere. "Our theorists," notes Forster, "have come up with nonreligious liberal theories that mimic, in secular form, the morality of the older, explicitly religious liberal theories that emerged from the Enlightenment" (191–92). Here, however, Forster follows Locke in concluding that nonreligious sources of moral and political authority simply will not serve our purpose. To put the point bluntly, without God's divine sanction behind them, nonreligious moral theories lack the authority to overcome the teeming diversity of opinion that generates the problem of political authority in the first place. "As Locke shows us, only God can morally unify people's divergent tastes. If a [moral] theory does not arise from God, 'mankind might

hearken to it or reject it as they pleased, or as it suited their interest, passions, principles, or humors” (193). Forster concludes, following Locke, that “Divine authority is probably the only hope for social and political solidarity” (193).

I suspect that many of us are sympathetic with Locke and Forster’s contention that moral consensus at some level of generality is necessary for a stable political order. Still, I suspect, many will part ways with them in their effort to build “moral consensus around a set of shared beliefs about God that are very certain” (219). Absent many of the presuppositions about biblical authority and natural theology that Locke and his audience largely held in common, it is not obvious that, practically speaking, such a moral consensus is possible today in explicitly theological terms. Nor is it clear from a theoretical perspective what role such a substantive consensus, including explicit claims about God, were it to be reached, should play in the context of establishing a political constitution for a pluralist society. The prepolitical moral consensus on which the political order would rest on this account, including its theological content, would be the basis of legitimate political authority, and any challenge to the terms of this prepolitical moral consensus would represent a threat to this authority. Even Locke’s epistemology of limits will not preclude disagreement once and for all on those moral and religious issues deemed highly certain (one need only consider our current political debates about global warming to see a current example of very certain beliefs retaining their ability to create political and social unrest); to turn such disagreements into challenges to political authority itself seems an unlikely strategy for diffusing the political pressures generated by moral and religious pluralism in the first place. Before concluding that political authority in modern pluralist societies can be legitimized only in terms of an establishment of religion, I think there are alternatives worthy of our consideration. That being said, I wholeheartedly recommend Forster’s very fine work for its valuable contributions to Lockean scholarship and for its thoughtful and challenging contributions to contemporary political theory.

BRETT WILMOT, *Villanova University*.

STONE, RONALD H. *Prophetic Realism: Beyond Militarism and Pacifism in an Age of Terror*. New York: T & T Clark International, 2005. xiv+192 pp. \$27.95 (cloth).

There have been too few theological voices who have confronted current U.S. foreign policy issues with sustained treatments of the complexities of international politics. Ronald Stone’s *Prophetic Realism* helps to redress this lacuna in profound ways. Integrating previous writings on Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and Christian realism, Stone articulates a theological and ethical critique of U.S. foreign policy. He argues that a prophetic realism, informed by biblical sources, a properly conceived anthropology, and appreciation for historical ambiguity, more adequately addresses issues of justice and international politics than the present administration’s realpolitik strategies. The book consists of an excursus into the development of realism and reflections on the nature of power (chaps. 1–6), a realist critique of just peacemaking and pacifism (chaps. 7–9), and the application of realist principles to contemporary debates on human rights, terrorism, and militarism (chaps. 10–12).

Stone defines prophetic realism as a “practical philosophy of international relations” (xiii) that “contains a large amount of normative theory drawn both

from Scripture and the history of moral philosophy" (xiii). Prophetic realism promotes the goals of peace and justice "while taking account from both theological and political perspectives of the forces that resist those goals" (48). Consequently, prophetic realism "is situated between the Bush administration's realpolitik and just peacemaking's more visionary or transformative perspective on foreign policy" (119). One of the significant strengths of Stone's book is his attention to realism's historical situatedness. In the opening chapters of the book, Stone presents an account of realism from its biblical sources, its Greco-Roman expressions, its divergent forms in Augustine, Calvin, and Machiavelli, and its American exponents in Niebuhr, Tillich, and Hans Morgenthau. He deftly distinguishes Hobbesian and Machiavellian realism from his preferred Niebuhrian and Tillichian prophetic realism, and he supplements close textual readings with anecdotal accounts (typically, recounted conversations with Niebuhr). Yet there are some conceptual problems. At one point, he seemingly conflates these different versions of realism, arguing that "classical realism [is] called in this book prophetic realism" (115), even as he had earlier contended that Roger Spegele's evaluative realism "is similar in purpose to the thesis of this book in revising classical realism" (48).

Stone's synthetic thinking—illustrated in succinct summaries of Stanley Hoffmann (50–52) and contemporary American debates regarding human rights (141–51)—reflects his typically critical and thorough analysis. Though, at times, the overall analysis is framed too conspicuously in the service of promoting the Morgenthau-Niebuhr-Tillich school, Stone does marshal criticisms against these thinkers (e.g., Morgenthau's claim about personal responsibility for foreign policy "ignores a significant amount of evidence" [33]). These critiques can suffer from a certain degree of datedness (as several chapters were published previously in the 1970s and 1980s); the reader sometimes feels as if the Vietnam conflict had just concluded. Nonetheless, Stone does hook up these historical considerations with contemporary debates regarding the pursuit of the war on terror. Retrieving the spirit of Amos present throughout the book, Stone boldly states: "The war in Iraq was not justified by defense against terrorism directed against the United States" (157). Stone proposes that rigorous attention to religious sources, an examination of the ontology of power, and prophetic resistance from churches can galvanize more just policies. He points to resonances between prophetic realism and Glen Stassen's just peacemaking, but he gainsays just peacemaking alone as an effective strategy "because it does not seem persuasive enough to guide and limit the policy of the solitary superpower" (109). Moreover, Stone polemically refutes Stanley Hauerwas's pacifist criticisms of Niebuhr. These constructive engagements—drawing on Stone's most recent writings—help distinguish subtle presuppositions in these theological and ethical positions (even if claims such as "liberation theologies and feminist perspectives have eroded the prophetic realist paradigms" [57] and prophetic realism "approves only of prudential use of violence" [159] are never fully clarified). Notably absent is just war theory; dialogue with representatives such as Jean Bethke Elshtain (*Just War against Terror* [New York: Basic, 2003], which also draws on Niebuhr and Tillich but for different conclusions) would have been fruitful.

In sum, Stone's interdisciplinary book makes an important contribution to current debates in theological ethics and international politics. Despite some minor shortcomings, Stone's project helps illuminate the challenges that

American policies have obviated or neglected and would benefit specialists as well as upper-level undergraduate and graduate students.

JONATHAN ROTHCHILD, *Loyola Marymount University*.

BARRERA, ALBINO. *Economic Compulsion and Christian Ethics*. New Studies in Christian Ethics. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xvii+248 pp. \$75.00 (cloth).

It is refreshing to find a contribution to theological economic ethics that reflects a strong understanding of the utility and limits of economic theory in interpreting today's global economy. Albino Barrera's monograph is one of those rare works in theological economic ethics that passes this test of economic seriousness. That he likewise displays close familiarity with biblical scholarship and the Roman Catholic social tradition makes this volume a substantive contribution to theological ethical debates surrounding contemporary political economy.

The object of Barrera's reflections is pecuniary externality, that is, a third-party effect of economic transactions that is mediated by market prices. Examples of pecuniary externalities include a farmer's loss of income due to larger worldwide harvests and the loss of housing quality for the family priced out of a gentrifying neighborhood. Barrera demonstrates how pecuniary externalities redistribute economic goods from persons who are already disadvantaged toward the more advantaged. He is specifically concerned with pecuniary externalities that entail the loss of a minimum threshold level of economic goods necessary to ensure a person's capacity to achieve the full human good. Below this threshold, persons are compelled to forgo some goods essential to human flourishing for the sake of others even more essential. Barrera presents a clear case for the moral claims of those who suffer a loss of essential economic goods through the collective activity of the market and a clear exposition of Christian warrants to redress such losses and restore such persons to full socioeconomic participation.

Barrera's focus on losses rather than absolute economic deprivation has advantages and disadvantages. Since losses are much more salient and observable than ongoing deprivation, this focus provides motivation for redress and simplifies the thorny problem of identifying relationships of responsibility between those who suffer hardship and those who benefit from particular market structures and rules. Barrera's focus on losses also facilitates his identification of biblical warrants for socioeconomic restoration. On the other hand, Barrera's focus biases the result of any redress toward some identifiable status quo ante, which may or may not ensure the economic rights that he considers minimally necessary. Likewise, he does not address the question of restoration for that significant share of the world's population that has never possessed all of the goods he identifies as economic rights.

Barrera's choice of sources for theological warrants—the Bible and the Roman Catholic tradition—invokes a familiar problem for theological ethics. While these warrants may appeal to a broad spectrum of Christian and Jewish communities, Barrera clearly intends them to influence pluralistic national and international polities, not just religious individuals and communities. This is evident in Barrera's application of his restoration ethic to the question of national agricultural subsidies. Barrera argues that "rights language arguably pro-

vides the best means with which to define mutual obligations and claims in ameliorating economic compulsion in our contemporary age of humanism and pluralism" (141). However, this assessment rests on the unexplored assumption that reason provides sufficient ground and motivation for the same understanding and recognition of economic rights that Barrera grounds on theological sources.

One example of divergence between theological notions of communal responsibility and rational conceptions of economic rights is found in the Catholic principle of the universal destination of the goods of the earth, which Barrera affirms. This principle rests on biblical warrants concerning land and other resources that are self-evidently given rather than created by human beings. But in the contemporary global economy the scarce factor of production is not land but the knowledge, capability, and creativity of the human mind. To argue that the economic needs of the poor are rights that constitute claims upon the minds of the affluent contradicts the Enlightenment understanding that one's body and mind are inalienably one's own.

Therefore, while Barrera acknowledges the substantial cost that restoration imposes on the relatively affluent, he sidesteps the problem of how religiously motivated individuals and communities can compel or persuade the pluralistic polities of affluent nations to act counter to their significant economic interests for the sake of the moral claims of the world's poor. A more realistic assessment would pay greater attention to those approaches toward socioeconomic restoration that are feasible for religious persons and communities among the world's relatively affluent who can be persuaded by theological warrants to forgo their economic interests for the sake of the neighbor.

BRUCE P. RITTENHOUSE, *University of Chicago*.

BROWNING, DON S. *Christian Ethics and the Moral Psychologies*. Religion, Marriage, and Family. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006. ix+244 pp. \$30.00 (paper).

This book is based on Don Browning's most recent work on the relation of Christian ethics and the moral psychologies—a plural that the author uses in order to indicate the pluralist nature of this academic field. Browning states his guiding question as follows: should "moral theologians critique these psychologies and perhaps cleanse both theology and the wider culture of the possible mistaken images of moral responsibility proffered by them?" His "brief answer" is that "*contemporary moral psychology can contribute to Christian ethics, but only when it does its research with competent pre-scientific or pre-empirical understandings of morality*" (2). Accordingly, Browning's special interest refers to the understandings of morality that research presupposes. It is these preunderstandings that require critical analysis by, among others, theologians. The model that Browning uses in his analysis is an adaptation of Paul Ricoeur's critical hermeneutical ethics. This ethics combines hermeneutical sensitivity to different cultural and religious traditions with a critical point of view informed by, among others, the social sciences and philosophical ethics. It gives due attention to particular visions of the good life and of the "status of humans" (10) without losing touch with the claims of universalist ethical criteria ("the deontological test" [52]). It may also be called "antifoundationalist" in that it begins with history and moral tradition rather than with empirical research as a supposedly objective basis.

The individual chapters of the book refer to this critical hermeneutical understanding developed in the introduction and in chapter 1 (in conversation with Reinhold Niebuhr) in different ways by taking up various models from the field of moral psychology and by discussing them critically: psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud and, in a special chapter devoted to the understanding of generativity, Erik H. Erikson), structural-developmental theories (Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol Gilligan), Johannes van der Ven's understanding of moral education and practical theology, evolutionary psychology, feminist approaches, rational-choice economics, and, throughout the book, the collaborative "Hardwired to Connect" study on "authoritative communities" published a few years ago. In addition, there are chapters with a focus on Christian and philosophical ethics: on Niebuhr and Ricoeur, whose influence on Browning is visible in his whole approach, but also on a number of contemporary ethicists like Martha Nussbaum, Owen Flanagan, Gene Outka, and Antonio R. Damasio.

Whoever has followed Browning's publications over the last three decades will easily recognize the impressive continuity of his interest in the relationship between practical theology and ethics. As he points out himself (193), the present book elaborates what Browning refers to as the different "levels or dimensions of the human" implied in the conversation between theology and psychology (193). At the same time, the book is much more than a mere sequel to Browning's earlier statements. It is a major step toward a "practical theological ethics" (85) that brings together theology, philosophical ethics, and the varieties of moral psychology. It takes up the most recent challenges of evolutionary psychology. Finally, it makes a major step toward a theological understanding of premoral goods—a topic that Browning rightly considers of key importance for the public role of theology.

While this book will be of great interest to Christian ethicists as well as to religious and moral educators, it should also be read by social scientists, philosophers, and evolutionary psychologists. Browning's view that nontheological disciplines depend on images of the human that play a guiding role for their research, as well as for the interpretation of their results, points to the continued need for more interdisciplinary work. According to this point of view, theology should play a public role in identifying such prescientific or preempirical images as well as in describing and advancing refined and responsible images based on the Christian tradition. The present volume goes a long way in either direction.

FRIEDRICH SCHWEITZER, *University of Tuebingen*.

WOLFSON, ELLIOT R., *Aleph, Mem, Tau: Kabbalistic Musings on Time, Truth, and Death*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. xv+327 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).

This is a challenging and demanding book whose task is "to elucidate hermeneutically the correlation of time, truth, and death as may be educed from works of kabbalistic theosophy" (61). By means of phenomenological investigation, Elliot Wolfson uncovers the connection between time, truth, and death in kabbalah in addition to illustrating how constructive Jewish philosophy could be done, that is, intertextually, hermeneutically, phenomenologically, and poetically.

Chapter 1 discusses the philosophic musings on time by Zeno, Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine, Husserl, and Whitehead among others who wrestled with the paradoxical nature of time: if time is like a river, all attempts to understand time are like “freezing the river in motion, but the river thus frozen is not the river one set out to freeze” (4). Husserl’s phenomenological method was the main attempt to overcome the paradox, and it, through Heidegger’s modification, shapes Wolfson’s understanding of time and his interpretation of kabbalah. Heideggerian understanding of the self’s unveiling, or unhiding, of being (*Entbergung*) accords better with the kabbalistic mind-set than with the austere but rather shallow focus on ordinary language of analytic philosophy.

Wolfson shows (34–46) how Schelling made use of kabbalistic doctrines, known primarily through Christian Knor van Rosenroth’s *Kabbalah Denudata* (1677–84) (35). In the kabbalistic sources Schelling found a concept of God in which “all opposites are broken, which is nothing other than their very non-being, and that which therefore has no predicate except predicatelessness, without therefore being a nothing or an absurdity” (34). Heidegger would build on Schelling and carry kabbalistic insights further. Thus the reading of kabbalah through the lens of Heidegger could be historically justified.

The highly erudite philosophical essay of chapter 1 should lead the reader to appreciate the paradoxality of time, the phenomenological method to address the paradox, and the role of language, especially in the capacity for emplotment. Wolfson explains how “the narrative structuring of time by the temporal structure of narrative” is not dependent on sequential coherence. “On the contrary, narrated time, in its cyclicity, revolves about the poles of memory and expectation. Future is retained in the protentionally envisaged past; retrospection ensues from retrieving traces of what is yet to be left behind” (49–50). The interplay between time of consciousness and consciousness of time was best understood by Franz Rosenzweig, who has inspired Wolfson’s philosophizing on time. Without engaging Rosenzweig’s “metaphysics of temporality” in detail, Wolfson highlights the connection between time (especially in the form of the present and *Sprachdenken* [speech thinking]; 50). Indeed, Wolfson puts Rosenzweig’s New Thinking into practice, although, for Wolfson, kabbalah, and not the Bible or the Midrash as it was for Rosenzweig, is the point of departure. Wolfson is also indebted to Emmanuel Levinas, another follower of the New Thinking, who showed how time and narrativity are linked to the awareness of the Other and why gender is indispensable to thinking about the Other. Chapter 1 thus sets the link between time, language, narrativity, paradoxality, otherness, and gender that will be elaborated in the ensuing chapters.

In chapter 2, Wolfson presents an overview of how these components operate in kabbalah. Since kabbalah, as he correctly insists, embellished and deepened rabbinic Judaism, understanding kabbalah yields deep insights about rabbinic Judaism, especially in regard to the convergence of space and time. On the basis of the rabbinic assumption that “there is no before and after in Scripture,” the hermeneutical project of Torah study manifests the “linear circularity” that is the heart of Jewish religiosity. Through exegetical activity itself, “the meaning of a text that is inherently timeless is manifest only in and through an endless chain of interpretation that unfolds persistently in time; indeed, in its most basic hermeneutical sense, time is the unremitting recitation of the timeless text” (63).

Chapter 2 explores the kabbalistic discourse on time by educing many texts,

although emphasis is given to the thought of the sixteenth-century kabbalists Moses Cordovero and Judah Loew of Prague (Maharal). Wolfson argues that the affinity between Heidegger and kabbalah provides a philosophical vocabulary to fathom the depth of kabbalistic musings on time “in its timeless becoming,” a “time out of time,” a “time of limitless delimitation, delimited in the delimited limitlessness of the ten emanations, the world of unity” (79). Wolfson is not saying that one must know Heidegger to fully grasp kabbalah insights but that if one knows Heidegger’s philosophy one has a vocabulary with which to express the paradoxality of time that concerns kabbalah.

Three main insights emerge from Wolfson’s exposition of the kabbalistic conception of time. First, in kabbalah eternity and temporality are not in conflict: the Ein Sof is “temporal eternity,” and the Sefirot exemplify “eternal temporality” (75). In kabbalah the rabbinic term *seder zemanim* (i.e., “the order of time”) denoted the Sefirotic realm as “the paradigmatic pattern of temporality” (78), in contradistinction to the Ein Sof, which “is depicted as a state of timelessness.” Thus kabbalah expresses the timeless becoming of time where time is “the measure of the immeasurable” (166). Second, kabbalah accentuated the Jewish distinction between sacred and profane time. Highlighting the particularistic dimension of rabbinic Judaism, kabbalah insisted that sacred time belongs to Jews. The task of Israel, therefore, is to “emulate and thereby be conjoined to God,” a highly particularistic view that stands in conflict with the popularity of kabbalah among non-Jews today (80). And finally, the kabbalistic conception of time is inherently gendered. Wolfson’s claim is that gender symbolism in kabbalah expresses the divine androgyny in which the female is contained in the male.

The kabbalistic conception of time is illustrated in chapters 3–5, which explore speculations on the three letters of the Hebrew word *emet*: *aleph*, *mem*, and *tau*. In kabbalistic speculations *alef* is a reflection on the difference between “origin” and “beginning”; on this point the reading of kabbalah in light of Heidegger is most fruitful. In chapter 4, Wolfson focuses on kabbalistic speculation on the letter *mem*, whose orthography differs depending on the location of the letter in a word. The kabbalists linked the shape of the letter with the mystery of repentance (*teshuvah*), the mystery of the Jubilee, and the maternal Sefirah, Binah. Wolfson explores the gender dimension of kabbalistic redemptive self-understanding and exposes its anti-Christian intent (146–50). Chapter 5 is devoted to the kabbalistic speculations on the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *tau*, which is also the last letter of the Hebrew words *emet* (“truth”) and *mavet* (“death”). Wolfson persuasively contends that the zoharic speculations on death reveal how “the experience of death . . . provides with a phenomenological model of time that is circular in its linearity” (162). This is a truth claim not only about human existence but also about the Jewish tradition. Contrary to Rosenzweig, for whom Judaism is the only proper response to philosophy’s march toward death, Wolfson seems to support Heidegger’s nihilism when he states that kabbalah illustrates “how death unveils truth even while truth remains veiled” (162). Jewish philosophers who regard the relentless pursuit of truth as the source of vitality and hopefulness of future-oriented Jewish life may have difficulty with Wolfson’s philosophy of death. Wolfson is aware of the problem and acknowledges that on the surface “the deleterious ramifications of death outweigh the beneficial consequence of truth” (168). A closer reading of kabbalistic texts indeed proves the “essential nexus between truth and death” (171), but this nexus comprises a “syn-

thesis of opposites" (170), which is fully understood only by the select few, even among the kabbalists.

Wolfson is not a practitioner of kabbalah, but kabbalistic texts make up the fabric of his mental texture and kabbalistic insights frame his understanding of truth. Wolfson demonstrates that phenomenology is especially suitable to unfolding the meaning of kabbalah so as to appreciate its imaginative power and intellectual depth. A phenomenological reading of kabbalah enables Wolfson to successfully "articulate an ontology of time that is a grammar of becoming" (175). Readers who are willing to put the requisite effort into the book will be richly rewarded by grasping the depth and subtlety of this highly imaginative, speculative strand of Judaism.

HAVA TIROSH-SAMUELSON, *Arizona State University*.

HOROWITZ, ELLIOTT. *Reckless Rites: Purim and the Legacy of Jewish Violence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006. xiv+340 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).

Do Jews have a violent past? Has the Jewish festival of Purim provided an opportunity for collective violence? Have Jewish and Christian scholars exaggerated Jewish violence or covered it up? In this richly researched but often confusing book, Elliott Horowitz touches alternately on a number of themes in the historiography of Jewish violence, from the history and nature of Purim and the biblical Book of Esther, to the blood libel and other legendary Jewish assaults on Christians, to recent religiously sanctioned incidences of Jewish violence such as the 1990 Hebron massacre by the settler Baruch Goldstein.

The first part of the book concerns the history of interpretation of the Book of Esther. Chapter 1 covers Christian and Jewish scholarly attitudes toward the violence in its latter stages, which range from embarrassed to repelled. Chapter 2 looks at the characters Vashti and Esther (who became a heroine for Spanish crypto-Jews). Chapter 3 looks at Mordecai as a popular Jewish model for how to negotiate idols (and crosses) in everyday life. The chapter on Haman addresses this character's capacity through history to signify real anti-Semitic leaders—and thus Purim's capacity to give vengeance fantasies a controlled public expression. Chapter 5 describes the historical applications of the biblical term Amalek, one of Israel's biblical enemies (Exodus 17), to every people or ideology deemed implacably hostile to Israel. In orthodox enclaves today, as over the centuries, "Amalek" carries the sense of evil, with the implication that hatred and even extermination of those labeled Amalekites is divinely sanctioned (following divine sanction for Amalek's massacre in the Bible; Deut. 25:17–19). The term has since been applied to diverse enemies—including Native Americans by the Protestant Cotton Mather—but today the most immediate objects are Arabs.

Part 2 examines the various discussions of Jewish violence over history, linked sometimes to Purim, sometimes to innate Jewish tendencies, and sometimes to the outrage of Christian images in a landscape Jews and Christians shared. Chapter 6 looks at accounts of Jewish violence to the cross and sacraments: were these examples of ritualized desecration or spontaneous outbursts? Unfortunately, Horowitz does not give adequate weight to the Christian motivations to spread these rumors (as Miri Rubin did so brilliantly in *Gentile Tales* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999]), so the reliability of his accounts of Jewish ritual violence is not certain. Chapter 7 examines the more

academic reflections on the nature of the Jew—violently macho or effeminately passive? This topic has preoccupied many modern Jewish writers (most recently Daniel Boyarin in *Unheroic Conduct* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997]). Yet the discussion seems out of place in this book, for the last three chapters return to Purim as a potential locus of violence: have effigies of Haman always been temporary replacements for real victims (e.g., Christians), as was often rumored and even, by James Frazer, academically opined? Has Purim's carnival antistructure always borne a real tendency to violent uprising, as many modern Jews have worried? How did diverse Jewish communities elide local legends of community deliverance with the mythology of the Purim story, and with what further potentiality for violence? Horowitz goes through the historiography on a number of Jewish massacres and uprisings alleged to have occurred from the seventh through the nineteenth centuries, suggesting that "Jews, especially those of the young male variety, were capable, when sufficiently provoked, of reckless violence against members of the Christian majority" (291).

It is a thin thesis as theses go in this era of profound and discerning studies of religious violence. As much as Horowitz has obviously read on festival dynamics and the dissemination of the blood-libel legend, readers will find in this book no theory or general perspectives on the violent potentialities of festivals, or the dynamics of memory in traditional festivals, or religious enclaves' use of scriptural typology (like "Haman" or "Amalek") to demonize outsiders, or even the nature of violence as an accusation projected against the Other. Horowitz's interests lie principally with the politics of modern interpretations—how have modern Jews and Christians reckoned with a festival as strange and disorderly as Purim?—rather than with the analysis of Jewish violence per se. But even more confusing, especially in a book that opens with (and portrays on its cover) truly startling vignettes of contemporary Israeli settler ideology, is the lack of any overall argument about Jewish violence, or Purim itself, or even the character of modern thought on these subjects. Is this a history of creative Jewish resilience in the face of anti-Semitic threats or of a sordid Jewish undercurrent in history? *Reckless Rites* remains on the fence. DAVID FRANKFURTER, *University of New Hampshire*.

KLAUSEN, JYTTE. *The Islamic Challenge: Politics and Religion in Western Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. 253 pp. \$29.95 (cloth).

Muslim communities are slowly becoming an integral part of Western Europe. In the process, political and legal systems change and new understandings of the Islamic faith develop. In her book, Jytte Klausen describes these intertwined processes of adaptation taking place within both the majority and minority populations. The description is based on more than three hundred interviews with Muslim leaders in six European countries (England, France, Germany, Denmark, Holland, Sweden) and on analyses of political and legal developments in these countries. The writer's contribution proves strongest in the sections in which she portrays the states' attempts to adjust their legislation to the presence of Muslim minorities. Overall, Muslims are understood as challenges, less as contributing cocitizens. Klausen points out that anti-Muslim rhetoric can be found not only within xenophobic parties across Europe but also within the political mainstream. Muslims are for various reasons situated

in the center of an ongoing debate over the inherence of religion to public policy and national identities. The writer's argument is supported by a wealth of striking and even absurd examples. For example, when Baden-Württemberg (Germany) in 2004 prohibited teachers from wearing the Islamic head scarf, seeing it as a threat to Western norms, the Land still allowed crucifixes to hang in the classrooms, arguing that human rights and democracy were rooted in Christianity. In these parts of her book, Klausen eloquently shows that the European legislative and political fumbling with the presence of Muslim minorities is essentially about (re)defining and securing (often exclusivist) national selves.

While Klausen points to discriminatory political practices against Muslims in Europe, she is careful to keep a pragmatic, balanced view of the situation. Although growing xenophobia and neonationalist sentiments contribute to the image of Muslims in Europe as a challenge, other reasons also fuel this image. Across Europe the majority of Muslims rank high within unemployment statistics. As in other parts of the world, radical interpretations of Islam have gained ground within Muslim subcultures, promoting social segregation and even terrorism. These are social factors that European nation-states essentially have to deal with to prevent social anomie and protect their citizens. Further, the presence of Muslims points to the tough challenge of balancing religious and secular law, for example, in the case of marriage, and of balancing individual human rights (particularly for women) with those of minority rights. In these sections, Klausen's use of interview and survey data is useful, highlighting the variety of Muslim positions and what they contain.

Klausen leads us far into a better understanding of Europe's Muslim communities. One important lesson is that if we are to understand Western Muslims and Western Islam, we must understand them in relation to the context in which they live. However, while the writer's description and analysis of political and juridical developments stand strong (she is a political scientist), the clarity of her contribution is frequently blurred by her use of categories in the field of religion. What, for one thing, is a "Muslim leader"—a term and a group of people that she continuously refers to and on which she bases many of her arguments? Some clarity appears in the book's final appendix, where Klausen (among others) explains her understanding of the terms "Muslim" and "elite." The definition of the latter as "individuals in elected or appointed office in national and local governments, and in national, regional, or large city civic organizations from political parties to secular councils for mosques and advocacy groups" (215) indeed includes the elite perspective. However, as a reader, one lacks the perspective of representation, of leadership (the term used in the rest of the book) being the act of exercising authority because a particular audience or community allows one to. Readers acquainted with Europe's political and religious scene will notice that included on the list of "Muslim leaders" are people who are publicly highly critical of Islam and who neither see themselves nor are seen by Muslim communities as their representatives. Although many prolific leaders of Muslim organizations and institutions figure in the description as well, the lack of clarification about what "Muslim leadership" includes is the strongest problem of the book, as also when the writer tries to delineate different positions within the leadership. Another criticism is that Klausen, in her attempt to explain the European situation to a North American audience, abruptly includes examples from the North American context. Albeit a minor point, it nonetheless demonstrates

that the book, in spite of its many important findings, would have benefited from stricter framing.

GARBI SCHMIDT, *Danish National Institute of Social Research*.

SARROUB, LOUKIA K. *All American Yemeni Girls: Being Muslim in a Public School*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005. 168 pp. \$49.95 (cloth); \$18.95 (paper).

This book, based on more than two years of ethnographic research, is a valuable and timely addition to a sparse field. Loukia Sarroub attempts the daunting task of covering various worlds in this ethnographic portrait: Cobb High School, its various communities, and the Yemeni community of Dearborn, Michigan. She shows that culture, economics, educational politics, and domestic politics all play significant roles in Yemeni American girls' choices, resistance, and adaptation and that these girls struggle for success in their "Yemeni" and "American" lives.

However, this book often reifies the conflict between the "American" and "Yemeni/Muslim" lives. The (unexamined) constricting-liberating/Yemeni-American dichotomy that Sarroub seeks to trace is insufficiently fleshed out. In chapter 4, "Islam and Conflicting Visions of Literacy," Sarroub delineates many of the girls' hybrid identity practices (music, religious education, and clothing practices) that "helped connect American and Yemeni life more concretely" (70), yet the structure and central thesis emphasize overriding conflict. The book's conflict-centered structure and thesis are not aligned with much of the data, which emphasize bridges and hybridity. Sarroub argues extensively that Saba's prayer in her car (59)—an incident that launches the author's "conflict" argument in chapter 4—is "neither conventionally Yemeni/Muslim nor commonly American but somewhere in between" (62); however, prayer in vehicles is actually common in the Muslim world and is derived from Muhammad's practice of praying while riding a camel.

It is hard to see why Sarroub argues that Qur'an reading "reified [the girls'] marginality . . . [in] American public schooling and society" (76); on the contrary, the data show that the girls' strategic use of religious literacy enables them both to resist family restrictions and to navigate American spaces with much success. One factor that does contribute to the girls' marginality and that goes relatively unexamined is American cultural racism. Chapter 3, "Classroom as Oasis," reifies a view of the classroom as safe, while earlier examples in the book suggest that the classroom is often "unsafe" and "uncomfortable" (46, 57).

Sarroub cites the Michigan standards to support her claim that American schools help develop students' individual voices (63), but one would expect ethnographic information about how this policy is practiced on the ground. She offers a brief aside that "critical analysis of texts in [public] classrooms is rare" (63), but we are left to accept (uncritically) a view of public school teaching that conflicts with teacher-centered (74) Yemeni mosque schools. A single ethnography cannot do everything, but such important omissions should be identified.

Ultimately, Sarroub's ethnographic eye focuses far more critically on Yemeni spaces than on dominant majority spaces. Though her sympathetic perspective vis-à-vis the girls shines through, in chapter 5, "The Tension Teachers Face," Sarroub provides examples of the teachers' blatant sexism and cultural racism

but generally provides no critique. Nor does Sarroub provide corrective commentary for Mrs. Barnabey's claim that the Friday noon prayer could be a "made-up" ritual (106), leaving the (uninformed) reader to believe that the Friday prayer is merely an excuse to miss classes.

Proofreading by a Muslim academic could have helped eliminate several linguistic and theological errors, such as the above; for example, the correct term is *muhajjibat* (a woman who observes Islamic norms of clothing or at least covers her head), not *hijabat* (ubiquitous in the book), and Sarroub's definitions of *makruh* and *halal* are incorrect (64). She also claims that most girls and boys did not understand what acts were "*mahkru* [*sic*]" (disliked; 65): what is the basis of her observation? And how much of what she reports to be theological knowledge is still based on these same girls' and boys' opinions? For example, she claims (incorrectly) that the Prophet forbade eyeliner and nail polish (64) and that smoking is forbidden in the Qur'an (52).

Sarroub contends: "As long as the *hijabat* are constrained by the expectations of the Southend and Yemen, they are unlikely to benefit from or contribute to American society. . . . As long as they continue to marry men from Yemen who have little or no education, they are likely to relive their parents' lives in the Southend" (117). Are family expectations and cultural constraints peculiar to Yemeni Americans? What does Sarroub mean by benefiting from or contributing to American society? The case needs to be made for her unstated claim that reliving their parents' lives is a sad end to the girls' tales. Despite its flaws, however, this is an important book and should be read by anyone interested in American Muslim youth.

SHABANA MIR, *Athens, Georgia*.

FRIEDMANN, YOHANAN. *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. x+233 pp. \$85.00 (cloth).

This book offers a detailed and systematic account of key topics relating to early Muslim discourses on non-Muslim religious communities. Friedmann is the author of two earlier books on Islamic thought, both in the context of South Asian Islam. In the work under review here, Friedmann is concerned with how the "classical Islamic tradition" depicts the non-Muslim communities of which it knows and with how it envisions the relationship between them and Muslims. The "classical" tradition refers here to the Qur'an and its early commentaries, the reported statements of the Prophet Muhammad (hadith), and the discourses of Muslim jurists until about the mid-fourteenth century, though with considerably more attention to much earlier than to later figures. The views of the Shia are not included in the discussion.

In five major chapters, Friedmann examines how the early Muslims viewed the implications of the fact that the world around them was inhabited by diverse religious communities; how these communities were ranged and ranked in relation both to Muslims and to each other; in what ways the early scholars interpreted the Qur'anic verse according to which "there is no coercion in religion" (Q 2.256), when they deemed religious coercion to be acceptable, and precisely who, among non-Muslims, was thought to be the appropriate objects of such coercion; how apostates from Islam were viewed; and, finally, what the jurists said about marriages between Muslims and non-Muslims. In

examining these questions and the specific issues relating to each, Friedmann is concerned with the "Muslim ethos rather than with Muslim history" (12). This means, as he notes, that his study does not address how the views enshrined in the early textual tradition relate to the actual history, institutions, and practices of the non-Muslim communities living under Muslim governments. Nor is it interested in the history of the social, political, or cultural interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims. "It rather deals with the laws themselves [insofar as they concern non-Muslims] and the various ways in which they were explained, interpreted and related to the Qur'an and *hadith*" (11–12). Precisely why a choice needed to be made between "Muslim history" and "Muslim ethos" is not explained, however, any more than is the question of how the Muslim ethos itself is best delineated.

Drawing on a wealth of juridical and exegetical sources, Friedmann shows that early Muslim attitudes are considerably less friendly toward members of other religious communities than modern Muslim apologists and many Western scholars of Islam would like to acknowledge. He also shows, however, that an early layer of Muslim opinion is more favorable toward Jews and Christians than the more developed doctrines tend to be. The shift in the direction of increasing stringency is not always consistent or unequivocal. Yet, to the extent that it is discernible, it might reflect a time when a distinctly Islamic identity was yet to emerge. That fragments of an early layer of Muslim opinion are recoverable at all is a reminder, of course, that the developed tradition itself is not monolithic and that it preserves discordant views even as it musters revered figures to argue against them. For example, where the Sunni jurists generally stipulate the death penalty for a Muslim who apostasizes from Islam and refuses to reconsider his decision, some early jurists allowed the apostate indefinite time to repent, thus effectively revoking capital punishment in this instance; nor does the Qur'an stipulate capital punishment for apostasy. In some instances, views largely rejected by one school of Sunni law have found a more favored place in the doctrines of another. While three of the four classical schools of law stipulate that Muslims and non-Muslims are not equal as regards *lex talionis* and "blood money," the Hanafi school of law gives the same protections to a non-Muslim victim as it does to a Muslim—in this instance, probably preserving views held by some jurists prior to the crystallization of the classical schools of law.

Despite the exclusion of Shia views, this is the most detailed study to be attempted so far of Muslim thought and its categories of analysis as regards non-Muslims in classical Islam. The importance of this work also lies in its systematic approach. Friedmann is a meticulous scholar, and he attempts here to elucidate the numerous facets of the questions that relate to his subject and how varied schools of law and other early jurists had addressed them. The sheer variety of positions regarding non-Muslims in the classical tradition is compellingly demonstrated here, as are instances in which classical doctrines diverge markedly from certain earlier views and, occasionally, from the Qur'an itself.

There are, however, some difficulties with this book, and these are not fully captured in Friedmann's own candid acknowledgment of its limited scope. In examining particular actions and statements of Muhammad, Friedmann often seeks to contextualize his discussion in terms of the Prophet's evolving career. And on rare occasions, he pauses to note that subsequent juridical views may have had a specific political context. For instance, the jurists are considerably

less sympathetic to the Manichaeans than they are to many other religious communities: the Hanafi jurist Abu Yusuf (d. 798) allowed those Muslims who had converted to Judaism or Christianity the option and the time to reconvert to Islam, but those suspected of being converts from Islam to Manichaeism were to be executed without reprieve. Friedmann suggests that this view probably dates from a time of severe persecution of the Manichaeans under the early 'Abbasid caliphs, whom Abu Yusuf served as an influential judge (157–59). Such efforts at historical contextualization can be useful, and they occur all too infrequently in this book.

Friedmann's decision to leave aside the history of the societies in which Muslim discourses on non-Muslims found their articulation also means that the evolution of the ideas with which he is concerned can be only dimly perceived. There is, of course, a great deal that remains speculative about the earliest history of Islam. Interestingly, it is precisely with reference to that elusive history—especially the career of Muhammad—that Friedmann is most attentive to questions of historical context. Subsequent views are mostly expected to speak for themselves and to make sense on their own. But to juxtapose this multiplicity of juridical and exegetical views from the classical tradition as a whole without much reference to the changing political, social, and religious circumstances in which the putative authors of those views had lived makes it difficult to see them as part of a developing tradition or to understand why particular doctrines may have developed as they did, or how, and by whom, they might have been contested. As Patricia Crone has recently shown, for instance, Muslim discourses on jihad and on religious coercion were scarcely indifferent to changing political circumstances: scholars writing in a milieu of weakened Muslim governments—especially from the tenth century onward—sometimes took great pains to argue against forms of religious coercion earlier exegetes may have been willing to tolerate or defend (P. Crone, *God's Rule—Government and Islam: Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2004], 373–85). It is at such points that a choice between “Muslim history” and “Muslim ethos” seems especially constraining.

Even as an account of Muslim discourses on non-Muslims, Friedmann's approach is guided by the assumption that it is the classical tradition that can be taken to represent the Muslim ethos in general. The result is not only that modern Muslim discussions on tolerance and coercion (and the question of how they might relate to premodern positions) are largely left aside or that the history of doctrinal evolution within the classical tradition remains insufficiently explored. It is also that Muslim discourses belonging to the centuries between the formation of the classical tradition and modern Islam are very sporadically alluded to or, as is more often the case, passed over in silence. How the Qur'an, the hadith reports, and early juridical agreements and disagreements were interpreted, elaborated, contextualized, or marginalized by postclassical exegetes and jurists in response to the particularities of their own contexts and what light these discussions might shed on interfaith relations is not a question Friedmann attends to. The “Muslim tradition” of which he speaks is consequently much narrower than the title of the book suggests. It may be, of course, that, in taking the late medieval juridical thought into account, Friedmann's conclusions about the Muslim ethos might simply be confirmed. Conversely, we might well have had a more nuanced view of how premodern Muslim scholars thought about non-Muslims and, in the process,

about a scholarly tradition that, in many other respects, they continued to critique, adapt, and refashion well into modern times.

Despite these difficulties—which are less a reflection of the current state of the field in Islamic studies and more of the approach that Friedmann has chosen for himself here—this book represents a significant step toward an assessment of classical Muslim views of non-Muslims. It draws attention to the very substantial body of early Islamic juridical and exegetical literature on this subject, and it offers a useful guide to some of its varied content. Further studies of this subject will need to take careful account of Friedmann's work.

MUHAMMAD QASIM ZAMAN, *Princeton University*.

KITTS, MARGO. *Sanctified Violence in Homeric Society: Oath-Making Rituals and Narratives in the Iliad*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xii+244 pp. \$75.00 (cloth).

Sanctified Violence in Homeric Society is an expansive study that reaches far across both space and time from its central subject, the oath sacrifice as depicted in the *Iliad*. In treating Iliadic treatments of oath-making rituals in relation to their ancient Near Eastern counterparts and to modern theoretical accounts of outward religious practices, Margo Kitts offers scholars a number of intriguing new views on well-known pieces of poetic material. Yet her ambitious interpretive reach at times exceeds her grasp of the theoretical and philological issues involved in a study of such scope.

Even so, Kitts contributes considerably to the intellectual coffers of comparative religionists as well as classicists. Indebted herself to the late great Roy Rappaport, she applies very productively in the arena of Iliadic oath sacrifice this anthropologist's observation that ritual gestures can solemnize less weighty ritual words (42–43). As a result, the inclusion of animal killing in oath making immediately becomes more intelligible (43, 123, 155).

Also clarified by Kitts's insightful readings are three of the *Iliad*'s most memorable scenes: (1) the Achaean commander Agamemnon's attribution of his ill-advised appropriation of the hero Achilles' concubine Briseïs to Zeus, Fate, and the Fury (*Iliad* 19.86–89), (2) Achilles' slaughter of twelve Trojan youths on the pyre of his departed companion Patroclus (*Iliad* 18.336–37, 23.175–76), and (3) Achilles' killing of Lycaon even as this Trojan prince supplicates him (*Iliad* 21.114–19). The first scene Kitts sees as a necessary narrative preface to an oath ritual that will reaffirm and reinforce Agamemnon's inculpability and authority (149); the second, as the semantic imbrication of "killing in revenge, killing in battle, and killing in sacrifice" (162); and the third, as a parallel to an oath sacrifice in ritual form and thus in consecrated content (167–68).

But, by a different token, certain of Kitts's assertions and representations ring less true. In her work, two sets of overly speculative assertions ensue from ungrounded theory and two types of marred representations result from imprecise philology.

Kitts first asserts that Iliadic depictions of oath-making rituals reflect actual practices of this kind that were performed in archaic Greece (6). Yet, in the absence from her discussion of any extratextual evidence of these ancient rites, it is difficult to assess whether the poetic portrayals reflect real rituals plainly like a faithful looking glass, in the warped manner of a fun house mirror, or in some intermediary way. Kitts herself hints at the last when she hypothesizes

that Homer wove as part of his woof aspects of actual ritual performances into the warp of the *Iliad's* larger narrative (21).

Kitts's second propositional problem concerns her comparison of Iliadic oath making with similar sorts of ritual speech from the ancient Near East. To this end, Kitts advances a diffusionist argument, contending that similarities between the Greek and Near Eastern oath-making scenes stem from the interchange of oath rituals over the porous borders between Greece and the Near East (9, 84). It is initially unclear, however, how such interdiffusion occurred if indeed the rituals rendered in Iliadic oath-making scenes were as resistant to change as the divinely encoded and punctiliously performed practices to which Kitts parallels them, namely, Rappaport's "liturgical orders" (74). Happily this apparent paradox can be resolved by recourse to Rappaport's recognition of liturgical orders' "adaptive characteristics" (*Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 267), though Kitts does not mention them.

Philological as well as theoretical issues impinge on Kitts's study. Many of her translations of Iliadic passages contain inaccuracies. For instance, she renders the word *apêteisan* (they pay) in line 4.161 as "he will avenge," even though this is the third-person plural (not singular) form of the gnomic aorist tense of the Greek verb *apotínō* in the active (not middle) voice. Moreover, the six appearances in Kitts's work (16, 81, 112, 161, 185, 206) of the passage in which this word occurs (*Iliad* 4.158–62) exemplify her tendency toward repetition and suggest that her philological argumentation could have been condensed. The presentation of Kitts's study is also diminished by numerous errors of spelling, citation, punctuation, and accentuation. Nevertheless, I think that anyone interested in studying religious rituals—actual or imagined—will profit intellectually from observing Iliadic oath sacrifices through Kitts's wide-ranging and often keen-sighted eyes.

SHUBHA PATHAK, *American University*.

CLARK, MARY ANN. *Where Men Are Wives and Mothers Rule: Santeria Ritual Practices and Their Gender Implications*. History of African-American Religions. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005. 208 pp. \$59.95 (cloth).

In this well-written and suggestive theoretical study, Mary Ann Clark intends to show that Santeria is a female normative system in which all practitioners, regardless of their own understandings of sex, gender, or sexual orientation, are expected to take up female roles. In this she is eminently successful; she is less successful in her second major goal, that is, "to formulate the beginnings of a theory of contemporary Orisha traditions using Western philosophical categories while approaching them from a different perspective" (3, 21). A third subtheme throughout the work is Clark's attempt to stake out a synthetic middle position between the essentialist/constructionist poles of contemporary feminist theory.

After a general introduction to Cuban Santeria and its relationship to the Orisha religions of West Africa and the African Diaspora, the book contains chapters devoted to gender, destiny and divination, initiation, spirit possession, sacrifice, and witchcraft, followed by a comprehensive summary and conclusions. The key chapters for Clark's argument are those on gender and sacrifice.

In the "Gender" chapter, she argues that within Orisha religion gender is a

weak category that provides a model for certain kinds of relationships based on a fluid concept of gender construction and that within Santeria this gender fluidity, while present, is contained within a rigid hierarchical scheme. The relationship between devotee's gender and the orisha's is ambiguous. Priests and priestesses are assigned to the orisha by divination and without regard to their own or the orisha's gender. In other words, the orisha while gendered are not gender specific, so that any orisha can serve as a role model for any devotee (38). Increasing prestige and higher rank in Santeria correlates with increasingly gendered status. In ritual terms, one proceeds from an ungendered to a gendered state, and at each stage the relationship between anatomical sex and ritual gender is different.

In the chapter "Sacrifice and Violence," Clark shows that Santeria practitioners operate under a different worldview than that which seems to inform the majority of the literature on sacrifice. Clark rejects the theories of Freud, René Girard, and Walter Burkert, all of which link sacrificial ritual to some originary act of violence that was subsequently sublimated, suppressed, or forgotten. Since Santeria sacrifice occurs within a symbolic context emphasizing gifts, food offerings, feasting, and communal celebration, Clark concludes that "conceptually, sacrifice follows the pattern of a normal meal, ritualized to incorporate the participation of powerful invisible beings" (119). Clark notes that "in general those scholars who have done a gender analysis of sacrifice suggest that sacrificial rituals are male dominated and male oriented. . . . Although not gender neutral, the Santeria ritual context provides for the participation of women in sacrificial rituals in ways that appear exceptional" (104). With regard to who may have animal sacrifices done for them and to which orisha they are directed, gender is totally irrelevant. The situation is more complex when one considers who may actually perform specific kinds of sacrifices, and Clark examines the rationales for excluding certain categories of women from acting as sacrificers despite their right to do so. Nevertheless, the predominating ritual symbolism of "feeding" the orisha invokes a stereotypical female domain regardless of the gender of the sacrificator or sacrificer (116).

This is a fine study, clearly and cleanly written, suggestive, and in general ethnographically accurate. Mary Ann Clark certainly has succeeded in her main intentions regarding gender. But gender, while enlightening, is too restrictive a lens for developing a theory of Orisha using Western philosophical categories. Clark's hits and misses in pursuit of this goal remind me of Victor Turner's comments on his own Ndembu research (*Revelation and Divination in Ndembu Ritual* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975]). Turner, like Clark, was looking to African culture for some evidence of ethnophilosophy, ethnotheology, or some "metalanguage," but he concluded that, "because the Ndembu have no specialized class of professional theologians or philosophers, [it] would probably be in the main a nonverbal language, a language of symbolic forms and actions" (20). Turner also describes a significant accomplishment of his work when he writes "Chihamba and other African ritual manifestations have taught me that it is not enough to counterpoise West and East as the archmodalities of human articulate experience. If 'heart-shaped Africa' (as Blake called it) may be considered mankind's civilizational South, we have there an autonomous set of linked world views which validly enrich our understanding of ourselves" (Turner, 21). Mary Ann Clark's study furthers that accomplishment.

GEORGE BRANDON, *City University of New York.*

FULLER, C. J. *The Renewal of the Priesthood: Modernity and Traditionalism in a South Indian Temple*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003. xx+207 pp., plates. \$17.95 (paper).

Renewal of the Priesthood picks up where C. J. Fuller's previous book, *Servants of the Goddess: The Priests of a South Indian Temple* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) left off. His earlier book, like this one, was an ethnography of the priests of the Madurai Minakshi Temple and examined the decline in the priests' fortunes after 1937, when the government, under the auspices of the Hindu Endowment Board, took over the temple's administration. Two years later, the Minakshi Temple was opened to low-caste Hindus, and the priests responded with an ineffectual strike that lasted until 1945. Based on the author's initial research between 1976 and 1977, *Servants of the Goddess* sought to explain the Minakshi Temple priests' deep demoralization and general loss of status following these pivotal historical moments in the life of the Minakshi Temple. Fuller ended that book with the solemn pronouncement that the priests' place in the ritual and social world of the temple would continue to fade. However, as early as 1984 he observed that the priests' social and economic fortunes had improved markedly. *The Renewal of the Priesthood* sets out to analyze this unexpected change and locates the "renewal" within the context of a greater emphasis of priestly Agamic education. Ancillary to this is the rise of Hindu nationalism in India in general and Tamil Nadu in particular, as well as the frequency with which temple priests—the Minakshi Temple priests are no exception—work abroad to serve the ritual and temple needs of the Indian diaspora.

The book's six chapters examine the reversal of the priests' fortunes in the context of their public and private lives, with a pivotal fourth chapter on priestly Agamic education. Fuller argues that the rise of priestly training in the Agamas—a corpus of Sanskrit ritual texts composed from the seventh century and believed to have been revealed by Shiva—emerges directly as a response to general critiques of priestly incompetence that the Minakshi Temple priests internalized. Agamic education, like much secular education in India, is based on rote memorization of books, and graduates of the prominent Agamic schools are regarded as more knowledgeable and professional than their non-graduate counterparts. In this sense, they understand their training in Agamic schools as preparation for the workforce of professional priests. The fundamental gap between Agamic school graduates and older nongraduate priests is clearly illustrated in chapter 1, which discusses the 1995 Minakshi Temple's Renovation Ritual. During this major ritual that Fuller sees as marking the priesthood's ritual, the educated priests were able to mediate, correct, and direct ritual practice and generally display their professional knowledge by reciting Agamic texts, even if they did not always understand their meaning. This new kind of education replaces oral transmission and breeds a greater priestly traditionalism envisioned as a return to a perfection of a sacred knowledge transmitted by Shiva and expressed through a greater adherence to Brahmanical values. Yet the very availability of these texts in printed form and in critical editions to be taught in the Agamic schools is a product of Indian modernity and inculcates in these temple priests modernist values of professionalism, money-making rationality, and progress.

In the final two chapters (chaps. 5–6) of the book, Fuller situates the rise of the priests' status against the backdrop of Brahmanical nationalism of the

late nineteenth century in Madras and the emergence of Hindu nationalism in the late 1990s in Tamil Nadu. He argues that the fortunes of the priests have always been affected by the Indian state, be it in the suspension of their tax-free land grant privileges in 1950, in the sponsorship of a Renovation Ritual, or in the promotion of Agamic education. He uses the Minakshi Temple priests as a case study to portray the interconnectedness of traditionalism and Indian modernity. This is typified in the priests' greater Sanskritization via Agamic education and their simultaneous cultivation of modernist attitudes of self-questioning and reform. As it is quite rare to be treated to such a thorough follow-up to an earlier book on the same subject, one of the great merits of this book is its insightful retrospection. At the conclusion of *Servants of the Goddess*, Fuller and the priests themselves predicted that their way of life was largely incompatible with modern life; the evidence presented in *The Renewal of the Priesthood* emphatically refutes such a claim and reflects the priests' "authentic representations of modern Indian society" (167). This excellent book is sure to be of interest to those with an interest in the study of Hinduism and temple culture as well as to those concerned with the various manifestations of modernity and traditionalism in India.

ARCHANA VENKATESAN, *St. Lawrence University*.

KOROM, FRANK J. *Hosay Trinidad: Muharram Performances in an Indo-Caribbean Diaspora*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003. viii+305 pp. \$60.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

This important book on how rituals and people travel and are transformed over time and space is distinguished by its immense scholarship and fine ethnographic observation. At the center of the book are the ritual processions held annually in Trinidad to commemorate the brutal death of Hussain, the Prophet's grandson, and his entourage in the battle of Karbala. The carnivalesque atmosphere surrounding the processions, with flags and highly elaborate drumming accompanying the magnificently decorated cenotaphs and giant twirling moon "shield" floats carried through the streets, raises questions about contested cultural localizations and mixings that the author addresses with great subtlety and attention to detail.

Shia mourning rituals and processions during the first ten days of Muharram have repeatedly captured the ethnographic imagination of social anthropologists and historians. One reason for this fascination has been the way that both ritual practice and the meanings attached to the passion plays and processions held on the tenth day of Ashura have varied over time and in space as they have spread to different parts of the Muslim world. From Emrys Peters's early analysis of the changing meanings of the passion play in a Lebanese village and Mary Hegeland's superb analysis of the shift in the mourning rituals' meaning in the period leading to the Iranian revolution, it has become evident that Ashura is not one thing only; on the one hand, notions of martyrdom and redemption may be imbued with political revolutionary zeal against tyranny, but, on the other, a dominant theme in the rituals is the identification with the suffering of Hussain and his companions, perceived to intercede with the living on the Day of Judgment. The founding myth of Karbala is also the basis of animosity between Shia and Sunni: in India, we are told, Shia curse the three first caliphs of Islam in their commemorative rituals.

Appropriately, perhaps, for a book about descendants of indentured laborers in the Caribbean, Korom chooses the language of creolization rather than syncretism or cultural hybridity to describe the apparent religious and ritual mixings typifying the Trinidadian and Indian commemorations. His main point, forcefully argued throughout the book, is that, while superficially the ritual appears to be radically altered as it shifts from Iran to India to Trinidad, these ruptures hide a deep symbolic continuity, shaped by its founding myth. Korom uses the opposition between *batin* (hidden) and *zahir* (visible), somewhat inappropriately in my view, to indicate the private continuities of mourning and communal ritual as against the changing public celebration, particularly marked in Trinidad, where the revelries and processions include Indian Hindus, Sunnis, and Afro-Trinidadians, all of whom also participate in the drumming and building of the floats. The genius of the book lies, however, precisely in the uncovering of the continuities in the public processions and floats between Trinidad, India, and even Iran.

Some of the excitement of discovery that the author as ethnographer must have experienced is lost, however, because he converts an "archaeology of knowledge" into straightforward chronology. He begins with the mythico-historical events, moves to the commemorations in Iran, then India, and, finally, the Caribbean. For an anthropologist, unlike the cultural historian or religious studies scholar, the revelatory aspect of ethnography as one digs deeper and deeper into symbolic practice is thus lost in what appears to some extent merely a fine comparative account. To get around this, I chose to read the last two ethnographic chapters on Hosay in Trinidad before reading the early historical account.

Korom is a master of ethnographic description, and this is one of the great strengths of the book. His own stress is on the phenomenological and experiential dimension of the ritual, in which actors share vicariously the experience of suffering. However, it is also possible to discern the core symbols that structure the ritual as a processual, transformative performance, and this is further highlighted by the Indian data. The cenotaphs and shields, supposedly alive with the spirit of Hussain and Hasan just before the procession, can be seen in light of the final burial of the (polluted) substances carried on procession in the grounds of a locally demarcated "Karbala." The "dead" floats are destroyed and cast into the ocean (in India they are sometimes cast into the river). We see here the metonymic or "magical" effects of a ritual that purifies and heals the living spaces of the community, as many such ritual processions do, while casting out the pollution of the old year. There is also a further diasporic dimension to the rites: the materials to decorate the floats are always imported from overseas, sent by diasporic members of the community, and the floats are cast into the ocean, connecting the former indentured laborers with their homes in India and, even further, in Iran.

Korom describes with commendable detail the organization of the ritual communities that build the floats and the ethnic and religious mixing of kin and affines, neighbors and friends participating in and sharing these activities. However, in a globalizing world, the revelry of the ritual, constructed by puritanical reformist Shia as entirely a non-Muslim "local" invention, has been attacked, just as such carnivalesque rituals have come under attack by reformists in the Berber ritual of Bilmawn celebrated in Morocco after Eid and brilliantly described by Abdellah Hammoudi, or as Sufi music and *mehndi* wedding celebrations have been attacked in Pakistan. Korom labels this contestation

"decreolisation" and argues persuasively that it is countered (as elsewhere) by ritual actors arguing for the legitimacy of a local "tradition." While one may not fully agree with his theoretical model, his analysis constitutes a masterly account of the complex polyethnicity and religious pluralism that characterize Ashura both in Trinidad and in India in all their richness. The text is illustrated with magnificent pictures (there is also an ethnographic film) and is marred only by a rudimentary index that is of minimal scholarly use, especially given the extensive use of footnotes.

PNINA WEBNER, *Keele University*.

CHATTERJI, BANKIMCANDRA. *Ānandamaṭh; or, The Sacred Brotherhood*. Translated with an introduction and critical apparatus by JULIUS J. LIPNER. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. ix+316 pp. \$74.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

A new translation of Bankimcandra Chatterji's *Ānandamaṭh* was long expected. Along with a long introduction (1–124) and a critical apparatus (231–81), Julius Lipner offers an excellent and enjoyable translation (127–230) of *Ānandamaṭh*, beautifully rendered as *The Sacred Brotherhood* (44–45). The text is based on the fifth ("standard") edition, the first to be published in book form on November 21, 1892. (The novel appeared serially in the Bengali monthly *Baṅgadarśan*.) Four appendixes close the book: "Early Versions of Part II, Chapter 8" (285–89); "Early Version of Part III, Chapter 11" (290–92); "History of the Sannyasi Rebellion" (293–96); and "Translations of the Song *Vande Mātaram* by Nares Sen-Gupta and Sri Aurobindo" (297–99).

Lipner shows how Chatterji was particularly concerned with the relations between Hindus, English, and Muslims, a topic discussed in five headings: (1) "The Making of the Times," (2) "The Making of an Author," (3) "The Making of Text," (4) "The Future in the Past: History in the Making," and (5) "The Making of a Translation." The last is a remarkable essay that discusses translation techniques grounded in sound methodology, from Jacques Derrida to semiotic theories reminiscent of Umberto Eco (115). But *Anandamaṭh* is a social novel, dealing with communal struggles. Chatterji's implicit suggestion is that Hindus only contributed to the Bengali Renaissance, and Lipner's attempt to question this assumption is limited.

Chatterji's readership was almost exclusively made of educated Bengali Hindus. The language in *Ānandamaṭh* reflects an agenda aiming to reinvigorate the myth of the Mother, a myth that Chatterji seems to consider transcultural and thus functional to patriotism. As a Bengali Brahman, Chatterji is familiar with goddesses like Kali and Durga and the concept of *śakti*. But his knowledge is mostly grounded on Sanskrit texts. The majority of Bengalis had no access to such literature. Lipner here fails to show Chatterji's actual knowledge of Bengali popular goddesses, truly a more cohesive factor, even among Muslims. The Bengal of *Anandamaṭh* reveals little knowledge of village religious life. The Mother is an easily understandable theophany for Bengali Hindus, but is Chatterji's Mother the same Mother of his fellow countrymen/women? The same applies to Islam. What did Chatterji actually know about Islam? Lipner does not investigate this. Rather he discusses Chatterji's understanding of Muslims as *yavana* ("foreigners," rulers) and *deśi* (indigenous converts to Islam; 64–65). Lipner shows that eventually Chatterji includes Muslims as sons of the Mother, thus giving them all the status of Indian (66). But the term *yavana* ended up

being perceived as derogative. Lipner shows how the same word had been used in Chatterji's production before *Ānandamaṭh*. Although I support Lipner's statement, the fact that Muslims call themselves *yavana* in the novels of an educated Bengali Hindu does not prove the lack of an offensive intent. However, earlier uses of the same term in similar contexts seem to confirm that *yavanas* are simply people from a different culture or country. In *Nirañjaner Uṣma* (sixteenth century), the last chapter of the *Śūnya Purāṇa*, a Bengali text attributed to Rāmāi Paṇḍit, Nirañjana/Dharmaraj (a Bengali fertility god) takes the form of a Muslim (*yabānarūpi*) and leads an army of Hindu deities turned into Muslim holy figures (prophet, angels, fakirs, etc.).

As Lipner suggests, the *santāns'* agenda was to fight any stranger, whether Muslim or British, and establish the *sanātana dharma* (180). In this sense, the book is surprisingly accurate. The occupation of countries like Iraq and Afghanistan by coalitions led by the United States and the spread of global jihād reflect eighteenth-century India's situation. Are the *santāns* insurgents trying to free their homeland of (*yavana*) occupiers? Are they trying to impose the *sanātana dharma* as Islamic militia or maximalist organizations such as al-Qaida try to impose sharia?

Such questions cannot be answered here. Yet truly Lipner's insight into *Ānandamaṭh* sheds new light on the Hindu-Islamic debate in South Asia. The publication in 1974 of *Anand Math* (*sic*), a comic book of the Amar Chitra Katha series (vol. 655; Mumbai: India Book House), proves the privileged position the novel has in Indian education (the series is widely used in schools across the country). One question remains however unanswered: What of *Ānandamaṭh* without *Vande Mātaram*? Communalist outbursts following the (mis)use of *Vande Mātaram* are deeply analyzed. But eventually what is controversial is Chatterji's intention to be a symbol of either the Indian resistance or the Bengali renaissance or both.

FABRIZIO M. FERRARI, *University of London*.

SWEARER, DONALD K. *Becoming the Buddha: The Ritual of Image Consecration in Thailand*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004. xviii+336 pp. \$41.00 (cloth).

For most of the last hundred years, academic scholars of Buddhism have sought to articulate what they understood as the fundamental relationship between the transhistorical religion and its local instantiations. For much of that period, scholars privileged what they saw as the rational perspective of the Buddha's teachings as the essence of Buddhism. In the last three decades, this emphasis has been challenged as historically problematic. Scholars have instead begun to privilege local forms of Buddhism and material culture over translocal, canonical forms. While a welcome shift in general, it has at times tended toward an inversion of what was privileged without an exploration of how the translocal and local forms interact. Donald Swearer's *Becoming the Buddha* seeks to take a central and synthesizing position in this debate, by providing a "more nuanced picture of the Buddha at the center of a living Buddhist tradition" (4).

The heart of *Becoming the Buddha* is organized around the processes by which a Buddha image becomes a consecrated icon of the Buddha. In chapters 3–6, Swearer describes the construction process of Buddha images in northern

Thailand and the ritual through which an image becomes the Buddha. This description is enhanced by the translation of instruction manuals and biographical materials that are preached to the Buddha image during the ritual itself. This preaching is conducted in northern Thailand by monks who have themselves achieved high levels of spiritual attainments in the course of their practice. In preaching to the image portions of the Buddha's biography dealing with his going forth and attaining enlightenment as well as descriptions of the perfections achieved by the Buddha, the eminent monks both instruct the image in its proper role as an icon of the Buddha and empower the image, "charging" it with their own spiritual attainments. Swearer provides extensive translations of this biographical material, which he suggests is a unique emphasis in the northern Thai form of this ritual. While the translations themselves are a major contribution to scholarship, what is perhaps of greater value is that these texts are clearly situated into their proper ritual context.

The other half of the book (chaps. 1–2, 7–8) addresses a slightly different set of questions focused on the powerful nature of the Buddha (and hence the Buddha image) and how this power should be understood at the center of the Buddhist tradition. In addressing these questions, Swearer focuses on what has normally been understood as a binary within the Pali tradition, that is, viewing the Buddha as *lokiya*, mundane, or *lokuttara*, transmundane. This binary is related to another in the *Mahāparinibbana Sutta* in which two models for the continuity of Buddhism are posited: that of the teachings of the Buddha (the Dhamma and Vinaya) and that of the cult surrounding his relics (3–4, 20). Rather than choosing to privilege one side of these binaries, Swearer seeks to synthesize them, locating the human body of the Buddha in the transmundane, both in relating Gotama Buddha to the bodies of other Buddhas in "history" and in tightly linking together what is often understood as separate in Theravada Buddhism, the *rupa-kaya* (the physical body) and the *dharmakaya* (the "Dhamma body," or the teachings). Then, relying on the work of François Bizot, Gregory Schopen, John Strong, and Kevin Trainor, Swearer argues that Buddha images act as icons of the Buddha, not simply as stand-ins for him (19). The analysis of Buddha and images allows Swearer to describe and locate the transmundane power of the Buddha as something inherent to the Theravada Buddhist tradition without appealing to some sort of esoteric practice, on the one hand, or the "corrupting" effects of "popular Buddhism," on the other.

This is a big and complicated book, in both good and bad ways. On the positive side, by locating his discussion of the texts firmly within a ritual context, Swearer's discussion of the ritual and its textual layers subverts, distorting binaries (such as text vs. action and rational vs. magical Buddhism) still prevalent within both religious studies and Buddhist studies (note esp. in this regard his discussion of *yantra* and *mantra* in Thai Buddhist practice). On the negative side, while the writing is clear and lucid, the argument is often not explicit enough. Some of this is due to the organization. For example, Swearer's translations are embedded within chapters, and while I generally agree with this choice, it can be confusing in terms of moving back and forth between translation and analysis (in the same way, a brief synopsis of the course of the ritual before the fuller presentation would have been helpful). The single biggest critique I have of the book concerns the near-total absence of human voices. Despite the book's being about the "lived tradition of Buddhism" (1), ethnographic evidence is lacking. Swearer makes reference to

things that people have told him, but his evidence is principally from the *suttas* or other texts chanted during the ritual. This is a problem in part because it distorts his argument in a few places (see, e.g., the discussion of five candles in the ritual, understood textually to represent the five Buddhas but understood by contemporary Thais to represent the Three Jewels, parents, and teachers [181–82]). Additionally, this emphasis on the textual is a problem because it prevents him from answering some important questions, such as why it is that image-consecration ceremonies have increased in the last twenty years. This lack could easily have been addressed by expanding the fine epilogue about contemporary Thai critics of images into a full chapter addressing contemporary Thai perspectives on images and image consecration.

This criticism, however, while important, addresses a lack, not a problem. *Becoming the Buddha* manages to diffuse the tension between the local and translocal in Buddhist studies by examining the formal, translocal aspects of a ritual located in a particular time and place. While there is a certain irony in the fact that a book focused on the lived tradition of Buddhism does not have many living voices in it, nonetheless, Swearer successfully uses the image-consecration ritual to show that the local and the translocal and the mundane and the transmundane are axes to be explored, rather than binaries to be opposed to one another.

THOMAS BORCHERT, *University of Vermont*.

COLETTI, THERESA. *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of the Saints: Theater, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval England*. Middle Ages Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. xiii + 342 pp. \$65.00 (cloth).

Recent work on late medieval drama has been particularly focused on understanding drama as a form of religious practice—as a sacrament in Sarah Beckwith's *Signifying God: Social Relation and Symbolic Act in the York Corpus Christi Plays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) or as a mode of biblical interpretation in Ruth Nisse's *Defining Acts: Drama and the Politics of Interpretation in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005). For these scholars, late medieval Christianity provides not only the content for the plays, its stories so to speak, but the very framework through which we should approach drama's distinctive representational power—to make bodies, such as the body of Christ, literally present. This focus on religious practice has gone some way toward showing how drama might be integrated into the field of Middle English literary studies more generally. For these scholars, plays are as much a version of "vernacular theology," to use the term popularized by Nicholas Watson, as mystical treatises in their attempts to represent and think through complex theological questions in English. Theresa Coletti's detailed and comprehensive study is an important contribution to this discussion; for Coletti, those theological questions have specifically to do with women—their role in the church and their role in salvation—and Mary Magdalene is the figure through whom these questions can be both raised and answered.

At the center of this study is one play, the Digby play of Mary Magdalene, which dates most likely to the end of the medieval period. This play presents difficulties for historical interpretation because there are no details about this play's performance history or its audiences. Although a focus on one play, one version of Mary Magdalene, might seem to limit the discussion, Coletti per-

suasively uses this play to get at the cultural crosscurrents at this particular moment in what one might call a "thick description" of East Anglian religious culture on the eve of the Reformation and, in the conclusion, into the Reformation. Wall paintings, mystical treatises (Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*, Julian of Norwich's *Showings*, and the *Book of Margery Kempe*), saints' lives, cycle plays, accounts of late medieval women's religious communities, and humanist treatises are set in conversation with the play. As this list should suggest, the historical context for this play is for Coletti almost entirely devotional, and the mercantile world and its impact on religious belief and practice, even as described by Margery Kempe, is absent.

After establishing the East Anglian religious context in the first two chapters, Coletti turns to the play's own complex theology in chapters 3 and 4, in the richest and most suggestive part of the study. Coletti is always attuned to the play's orthodoxy, yet her analysis suggests the way in which that orthodoxy allows for flexibility. For example, in offering Mary Magdalene as an authoritative model for the female visionary and contemplative, the play responds to contemporary anxieties about female visionaries, such as those described in Hilton's *Scale*. Or, in the following chapter, Coletti demonstrates the play's innovative view of gender: it sets the fluidity of sacred gender (in which Mary Magdalene is conflated with the Blessed Virgin Mary) against earthly gender (in male views of femininity), so that the former can serve as a kind of critique of the rigidity and violence of the latter. Because Mary Magdalene belongs to both versions, she acts as a bridge between them.

This study is not only wide-ranging in the material it brings together; it also draws on a wide range of approaches, from the material culture of late medieval devotion (in the first two chapters), to the play's view of gender, and finally to the play as a drama. This final focus once again underlines the play's capacity to resolve contemporary anxieties, this time about representation itself (how can the sacred be figured?). For Coletti, the play reinforces the importance of materiality, particularly Mary Magdalene as a bodily witness to the Resurrection. Although her emphasis is on the play as a solution to religious controversies, Coletti shows that this solution is short-lived: she ends her study with the humanist arguments over Mary Magdalene's significance, which focus on precisely the "problems" that the play has imaginatively solved. Coletti's study is a valuable addition to our understanding not only of this particular play but of the complexities of late medieval religion that are masked or flattened out by references to "traditional" religion.

KATHERINE LITTLE, *Fordham University*.

NEAL, LYNN S. *Romancing God: Evangelical Women and Inspirational Fiction*.

Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. xii+245 pp. \$45.00 (cloth); \$18.95 (paper).

Romancing God examines five themes generated from the history of evangelical romance. They are the discipline of fun, general evaluation of the genre, the ministry, fashioning of faith, and, finally, the romance of God. Utilizing audience, media, and popular culture studies such as those of Janice Radway, Henry Jenkins, and Ien Ang, the author approaches the genre of evangelical romance by means of both textual analysis and semistructured interviews. The majority of interviewees are middle-aged, white, college educated, married,

and regular churchgoers of free, independent churches of the South who are often generalized as "antifeminist."

Romancing God approaches evangelical romances from the perspective of their authors and readers. This is a particularly significant approach since, whereas the genre is seen as important neither literarily nor religiously by men in the evangelical community, women dominate the genre's authorship and readership. Neal's aim is to find "the negotiations, inconsistencies, and disjunctures of evangelical living" and thereby the "micropolitics of everyday life" (11) as revealed through women reading and writing evangelical romance. The romance writers, through creating their fictional characters and plots, actively participate in the ministering of women from all walks of life, while the readers, by means of identifying with their heroines' struggles through love and faith, renew their devotion to marriage and family. Together, these writers and readers constitute an extended "community" in cultivation of their evangelical spirituality through the formulaic plots of God's unfailing love and forgiveness. Once and again, these women are assured that, given sufficient patience and faith in God, "in the end everything will work out" (39).

Further, in the reading process women readers enjoy escaping from their routine chores and getting lost in the divinely blessed romance. Through devotion, or even "compulsion" (59), to fiction of unfailing love and restrained sexuality, these evangelical women reconcile their pleasure and piety and renew their bonds of family and Christian identity. Whereas forgetfulness and escape reflect women's need for individual indulging in entertainment, reading companionship and exchanges allow readers to cultivate fellowship with other women. According to Neal's consultants, these relationships "provide bandages, routine emotional support and minor services to help people cope with the stresses and strains of their situations." They become "a flow of supportive resources" for "emotional aid, material aid, information, companionship" (61).

Methodologically speaking, Neal's book is refreshing, not only for its being among the first few pioneer volumes in engaging studies of Christianity with theories of popular culture but also for its highlighting evangelical women as subjects of study—as both writers and readers. By careful examination of the narrative plots, authors' intentions, and readers' responses, Neal has underlined the multiple effects of writing, reading, and women's negotiation of faith and everyday practices. In sum, Neal's methodological contribution is threefold: first, recovery of the subjectivity of those seemingly, irredeemably submissive women of the evangelical community; second, the examination of the relation between women's evangelical practices and particular forms of popular culture, namely, the "low literate" genre of Christian romance; and hence, investigation of Christian faith as not only a body of great ideas, institutions, and universal systems but also one of concrete, particular everyday practices. In Neal's words, it is about "a web of everyday religious life" (7).

In these respects, Neal's book is encouraging. Her contentions about evangelical women and the romance genre are insightful and mostly convincing. Nevertheless, Neal is able to make her case only at the expense of not questioning the larger context in which evangelical women place their faith and pleasure. When the author asks the question of why there is a lack of evangelical romance book clubs and concludes that these women barely find time to meet except to read and escape on an individual basis (62), it makes one wonder if the community cultivated through writing and reading of the evan-

gelical romance is an exaggeration or a reflection of the well-wishings of the author. In effect, these women never challenge the hierarchal societal, ecclesiastical, racial, or gender structures in which they are often caught up; they never question the religious beliefs that shape their lives. Rather, they are intellectually and emotionally led to pursue high-sounding moral ideals through writing and reading formulaic romance stories that even the women themselves often found “superficial” and “alienating” (91). If Michel de Certeau’s “everyday practice” and John Fiske’s popular culture studies are meant to chart a trajectory of resistance by the most ordinary and popular mass, the disheartening findings of Neal’s study suggest that women evangelicals have not produced discordance, let alone resistance, vis-à-vis their daily popular reading practices.

WAI CHING ANGELA WONG, *Chinese University of Hong Kong*.

WALTER, JAMES J., and SHANNON, THOMAS A. *Contemporary Issues in Bioethics: A Catholic Perspective*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005. x+280 pp. \$65.00 (cloth); \$26.95 (paper).

As a starting point for introduction to the study of Catholic moral theology, the heuristic value of bioethics is enormous. The challenges of bioethical issues provide an exemplary medium for the exploration of the intellectual subtlety, sophistication, and capaciousness of the Catholic moral theological tradition. Any survey of contemporary bioethical issues in Catholic perspective consequently invites hope that it will prove a valuable teaching resource. James J. Walter and Thomas A. Shannon’s volume seems intended precisely to meet this pedagogical need. The good news is that Walter and Shannon’s volume is full of illuminating discussions of significant features of Catholic moral theology. The bad news is that the good news is delivered in a poorly edited, often poorly written, and sometimes less than perspicuously argued set of essays.

Here are the details of the bad news first. Divided into four sections that purport to establish some thematic coherence—“Theological Issues,” “Issues at the Beginning of Life,” “Issues Concerned with Genetic Medicine and the Care of Ill Patients,” and “Issues at the End of Life”—the book is pieced together entirely out of previously published essays. Like other volumes cobbled together in similar fashion, the whole turns out to be less than the parts. The repetition among the reprinted essays is excessive, in some cases extending to multiple paragraphs, including quoted materials and notes. Page 18 is reprinted verbatim on page 57; pages 19–20 appear again at page 60, page 75 at page 103, page 210 at page 242, page 217 at page 250, page 216 at page 243, and large portions of chapter 15 reappear in chapter 16 and again in chapter 17. The experience of encountering so much repetition, in conjunction with a large amount of bad prose, raises questions about the responsibility of publishers for the editorial standards of the works they publish. What does it mean to be an editor for a publisher of scholarly work, even if the work is not subject to peer review, when the work that appears seems never to have been subject to any editorial review whatsoever? I raise this question because it seems unfair to fault the authors alone for not having edited their own writings more thoroughly. What is the work of a professional editor? Is it not a responsibility of an editorial staff to steer authors away from this sort of misadventure?

Now here is the good news. Despite the significant flaws of this volume, several of the individual essays are fascinating and finely argued contributions to contemporary debates in bioethics. The finest is chapter 5, "Reflections on the Moral Status of the Pre-embryo," which provides a nuanced model of how much the ethical in "bioethics," especially regarding stem-cell research, is inseparable from responsible review of the science underlying the issue. Walter and coauthor Alan B. Wolter interweave the history of Catholic teachings on ensoulment with the basics of contemporary embryology. The result attests that all participants in contemporary debates in bioethics benefit from the contributions of Catholic scholarship. A further highly interesting contribution is the sixth chapter, where the concept of individuality as developed by Scotus is used to argue that cloning, as troubling as it seems, cannot be dismissed out of hand as a possible means of human reproduction. This sort of reaching into the tradition to make sense of an unprecedented contemporary bioethical issue is the accomplishment of Walter and Shannon at their best. Other valuable discussions include an account at the end of chapter 17 of the shift in magisterial teaching from a proportionalist to a deontological footing that constrains room for disagreement and an explication in chapters 14–15 of the "ordinary/extraordinary" distinction along similar lines, from a proportional to a procedural analysis that likewise constrains local judgments whether a medical treatment is ordinary or extraordinary.

As these comments suggest, a more accurate subtitle for this volume would probably be "A Liberal Catholic Perspective." The contributions by Shannon in particular seem written from the perspective of faithful opposition. The essays therefore provide the additional benefit of affording insight into the complexity of intra-Catholic debate and how it is the case that, while other denominations become riven by disagreement, the catholicity of Catholic moral theological discourse maintains itself without tearing at its center. Despite these merits, however, the bottom line is that a better starting point for students would be David F. Kelly's *Contemporary Catholic Health Care Ethics* (2004) or the fifth edition of Benedict Ashley and Kevin O'Rourke's *Health Care Ethics: A Theological Analysis* (1997), both from Georgetown University Press.

GEOFFREY REES, *University of Chicago*.

ELVERSKOG, JOHAN. *Our Great Qing: The Mongols, Buddhism, and the State in Late Imperial China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006. xvii+242 pp. \$52.00 (cloth).

The history of the Qing formation is by no means a subject ignored by scholars in the last few years. Indeed, within recent years the scholarly community has been offered an opportunity to become acquainted with a whole series of brilliant works on the subject. Nonetheless, this work by Johan Elverskog is a real qualitative leap in the Qing studies. Unlike a majority of the previous studies of the Qing, mostly devoted to the Manchu efforts to produce the new imperial system of values imposed on the conquered masses, this research goes in reverse direction—perceiving and reinterpreting imperial ideas on the periphery. Through the subsequent disclosure of many deficiencies in the modern discourse, the author manages to penetrate deeper into the essence of what he repeatedly calls "less an event than a process" (24, 93).

The key problematic of the research as formulated by the author in the

introduction is how it became possible that Mongols accepted the idea of the Qing as “the ultimate apotheosis of righteous rulers” (8). Throughout the first chapters, the author convincingly proves that there is a great difference in the way Mongols perceived themselves and their statehood tradition in the seventeenth century and the way they perceived themselves a hundred years later. On the basis of miscellaneous Mongolian chronicles, Elverskog demonstrates the process of replacement of *ülüs* as historically semi-independent entities by *khoshuuns*, or banners, which were purely administrative units.

Chapter 2 of the book mainly deals with the correlation of two basic ideas influencing Mongols’ minds on the eve and early years of the Qing formation—Chingis-khan as a translator of Heaven’s will and Buddhist Dharma. The fact that the author applies the word “God” (14 and elsewhere) for translation of the Mongolian *Köke möngke tngri* (eternal blue sky) cannot but raise doubts, since it clearly can disorient inexperienced readers by making them think that Mongolians were monotheists. In this chapter, Elverskog very convincingly demonstrates the Manchus’ successful efforts in transforming the cult of Chingis-khan as a transcendent authorizer of power into the mere seasonal rite.

In the subsequent chapters, the author no less successfully completes the task of demonstrating how Manchus had gradually usurped both concepts—Heaven and Dharma protection—converting them into “their exclusive property” (74). One of the most valuable observations by the author is the eighteenth-century paradigmatic shift of the historical perspectives of the Mongolian chronicles to the “globalization” of Buddhist history with the Qing as an apogee of the Dharma history. Simultaneously the author analyzes the role of Gelukpa orthodoxy in the unification of the Tibetan Buddhist religious segment of the Qing hierarchy of values. What is especially important, as Elverskog very clearly formulates, is the problem of the Tibetization of the Mongol Buddhist liturgy as an essential part of this development, which previously had been a subject of only superficial analysis. With regard to this important problem for understanding the genesis of the modern Mongolian culture, the book is clearly provocative and will challenge many. Equally challenging is the author’s statement about the process of mastering the spiritual space of Mongol as a part of the imperial process, but he pays disappointingly superficial attention to this problem.

The materials published on Inner Mongolia mostly in the 1980s had given a powerful impetus to scholars to produce new ideas and conceptions, and Johan Elverskog doesn’t lose his chance to use them very effectively in the last chapter, in which he offers very impressive conclusions about the localization process in the Mongolian identity, which dialectically goes along with the “globalization” of Mongolian historiography in the nineteenth century. But the sources are rather narrowly confined within the boundaries of the *Üüsin khoshuun* of Inner Mongolia, which leaves many questions unanswered. The reader may reasonably ask whether the author’s assumptions are equally applicable to the situation in Outer Mongolia, and, if yes, why it comparatively easily accepted the idea of separation from China in 1911. Surely, it is rather problematic to answer all these questions within the limits of one book. *Our Great Qing* has brilliantly completed a most important task: putting forward many new questions, opening numerous prospects, and making us go deeper in our understanding of the history of the Qing and Mongolia.

NIKOLAY TSYREMPILOV, *Institute of Mongolian, Tibetan, and Buddhist Studies, Siberian Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences.*

KURUVACHIRA, J. *Roots of Hindutva: A Critical Study of Hindu Fundamentalism and Nationalism*. Delhi: Media House, 2005. 365 pp. Rs 350.00.

KURUVACHIRA, J., *Hindu Nationalists of Modern India: A Critical Study of the Intellectual Genealogy of Hindutva*. New Delhi: Rawat, 2006. xii+283 pp. Rs 595.00.

Since the progress of the Sangh Parivar movement during the beginning of the 1980s, politicized Hinduism has received a lot of attention both from Western and Indian scholars and from political commentators. At the same time, there has been no dearth of publications on the subject, especially after 1992 when the Babri Masjid was destroyed. Many scholars have with their analyses contributed to our knowledge about Hindu nationalism in India, both historically and in its contemporary aspects. The names that perhaps most immediately come to mind are Walter K. Andersen and Shridhar D. Damle, Christophe Jaffrelot, Partha Chatterjee, Peter van der Veer, and Thomas Blom Hansen, but the names of many other scholars and intellectuals could also be mentioned as having contributed to our knowledge, from various perspectives such as politics, nationalism, violence, or ethnic or religious conflicts.

The two volumes by J. Kuruvachira are thus part of a long line of publications on Hindu nationalism and the Sangh Parivar. They supplement each other in the sense that the first volume deals in general with Hindutva ideology and strategies whereas the second has a more biographical character dealing with a number of persons whom Kuruvachira considers important to this ideology.

In contrast to the above-mentioned authors, Kuruvachira's object does not seem to present his readers with a traditional description and analysis of the Sangh Parivar and its ideology. Rather, it seems to be to compose two battle treatises with which, in the name of Indian secular values, he may inform his Indian fellow citizens about the wickedness and the evils of Hindutva. Thus, the aim of both books is polemical, and, when they both carry the words "Critical Study" in their subtitles, it is not in the traditional, scholarly sense but in the direct sense of intellectual and political critique.

In the view of Kuruvachira, Hindutva ideology is a dangerous phenomenon that has to be opposed and fought because of its "anti-pluralistic, anti-secular, communal, ethnocentric, nationalistic, religio-political, fundamentalist, aggressive and militant outlook" (63), and, in the earlier of the two books under review, he tries to describe Hindutva ideology as a false, upper-middle-class ideology that takes true Hinduism hostage in order to transform India into a monocultural and monoreligious nation with the help of the ideology of "Hindu cultural nationalism." In order to reach this goal, it falsifies Indian history by creating a complex set of "myths," such as the ideas of a Vedic golden age, the Aryans as the original inhabitants of India, the Aryan India as the mother of all civilizations, Hinduism as the eternal religion (*san tana dharma*), Hinduism as a continuation of the Vedic religion, Hinduism as a single religion, and so forth. Furthermore, it employs a set of strategies that, among others, support the caste system, suppress women, and stigmatize religious minorities (e.g., Muslims and Christians).

In the second chapter of *Roots of Hindutva*, Kuruvachira also argues that modern Hindutva has its roots, in part, in the Advaita philosopher Shankara of the eighth century, Shivaji and the Marathas, and Italian Fascism and German National Socialism. In the final chapter, drawing on inspiration from

Ninian Smart, he carries out an analysis showing that Hindutva is nothing but a postmodern pseudoreligion with its own rituals, myths, and doctrines.

Kuruvachira contributes little to our general knowledge of Hindutva ideology. When this is said, it should, however, also be mentioned that his work is based on a very large reading of original sources. Furthermore, the author's extensive use of news coverage, especially from the period when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was in government in Delhi (1998–2004), cannot help but furnish interested readers with new and interesting references regarding day-to-day developments during this period. (For example, I found the references to the coverage of the later developments of the history book, or National Counsel for Educational Research and Training, affair very interesting.)

But the fact that the author has conceived the work as a major attack on Hindutva unfortunately makes him see mainly what he wants to see and, what is worse, to forget considerations regarding history and social context. In my opinion, a major problem with the book is the lack of distinction between Hindutva ideology and other, especially earlier, expressions of Hindu nationalist sentiments. Thus, in his critique of various points of the Hindutva ideology or strategies, he very rarely makes historical distinctions between the statements he criticizes, be they from a Dayananda Saraswati from the end of the nineteenth century or a Togadia from yesterday. To him they are seemingly all the same, being part of the same great conspiracy. This is, evidently, problematic from a research point of view. Probably the most outspoken example of this, is when, in chapter 2, he makes a comparative analysis of Shankara, the famous founder of the Vedanta system of the eighth century, and modern Hindutva ideology, concluding that Shankara deserves the appellation of being the "first Hindutva ideologue" (99), all on the basis that he spent much of his time trying to defend his own philosophical system and refuting other systems, a polemical activity that is quite common in the history of Indian philosophy. Here Kuruvachira is obviously only seeing the similarities and closing his eyes to the dissimilarities and the historical and social context.

In the second book, which may perhaps be taken as a kind of spin-off of the first, Kuruvachira deals with six personalities whom he considers "hardliners" of Hindutva and who, he says in the introduction (5), "have nurtured and propagated the ideology of Hindu nationalism and the danger it poses to India's cultural pluralism and secularism." The six persons chosen are Dayananda Saraswati (1824–83), Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920), Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883–2003), Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar (1906–73), and Sita Ram Goel (1921–2003). Of these the first five are, of course, well known and have been dealt with in many contexts. Here also, Kuruvachira is an able reader of the primary sources, although, as in the earlier book, he tends to read the sources in his own critical view, focusing on whatever may have influenced or reminds him of present-day Hindutva ideology. Especially in the case of Dayananda Saraswati and Vivekananda, but also to some extent in the case of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the question is whether he does not misrepresent them when he almost totally disregards the more ethical and social aspects of their activities, as well as the colonial setting in which they lived. Furthermore, in the case of Vivekananda, the fact that he favored Advaita Vedanta among religions and religious systems is interpreted by Kuruvachira as if he were a Hindu fundamentalist and a fanatic hater of foreign religions. Here, however, it should not be forgotten that when Vivekananda

held Advaita Vedanta high, it was also in comparison with other Hindu religious and philosophical systems.

Whereas Dayananda, Vivekananda, Tilak, Golwalkar, and Savarkar are all comparatively early and well-known figures of Hindu nationalism, little has been written about the contemporary figure Sita Ram Goel, founder of the publishing firm *Voice of India* and one of the leading authors of Hindutva within the last couple of decades, who is dealt with in the last chapter of the book. It would therefore have been a fine contribution to research had Kuruvachira given us an overall characterization of Goel as a thinker and ideologue. Instead, the chapter is mainly a bitter critique of only one of Goel's anti-Christian books, *Jesus Christ: An Artifice for Aggression*, from 1994. The goal of Kuruvachira seems mainly to have been to dismiss Goel's obviously idiosyncratic arguments against the historicity of Jesus, a discussion that was perhaps better left to considerations of theology.

To sum up, the two volumes under review are based on a solid reading of Hindu nationalist sources, both old and new. Although one may sympathize with the secular values of the author, according to the present reviewer the readings and views of the author are a little too preconceived and narrow, at the cost of social and historical contexts. As a contribution to the present-day moral and political debate about the legitimacy of the Sangh Parivar, however, these books do make for interesting reading.

ERIK REENBERG SAND, *University of Copenhagen*.

BRICKMAN, CELIA. *Aboriginal Populations in the Mind: Race and Primitivity in Psychoanalysis*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003. viii+285 pp. \$69.50 (cloth); \$29.00 (paper).

The heart of the psychoanalytic enterprise has always centered on its humanistic aim to gain insight into the unease and conflict that characterize humans and cultures. This aim has been furthered by various disciplines that, utilizing the insights of psychoanalysis, have endeavored to deconstruct various forms of sociopolitical and religious power. Many of these disciplines have turned their gaze back on psychoanalysis to reveal its complicity in the very forms of oppression it seeks to undo. Prominent among such studies are those from anthropology, which broadly sees applied psychoanalysis falling prey to the difficulties associated with any ethnohistory, and feminist critiques of Freud's supposed value-neutral understanding of gender and development. Building particularly on these latter two groups, Celia Brickman aims to show how Freud's clinical, metapsychological, and cultural works contain an implicit colonialist and racial subtext—one which, unless properly deconstructed, interferes with their emancipatory aim.

Brickman's initial move consists in deconstructing an über text: *Totem and Taboo*. The first two chapters are devoted to the figure of the "primitive" in early anthropological thought and how a racial subtext got into *Totem and Taboo* through Freud's championing of value-laden concepts such as Jean-Baptiste Lamarck's theory of inherited characteristics, Ernst Haeckel's recapitulation hypothesis, and the sociocultural evolutionism shared by Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin. Conjoined to psychoanalytic concepts like regression and development, the stage was set for framing the cultural Other as less individuated, civilized, and moral, as well as subject to the vicissitudes of enthrallment

and dominion. Those other than Caucasian, now evaluated with respect to the developmental norm exemplified by the civilized, individuated, white male European, became linked to the figure of the primitive, the mental development of neurotics, children, and, of course, women. In subsequent chapters, Brickman goes on to show how these themes pervade not only Freud's other cultural works but metapsychological and clinical ones as well. Astoundingly, Freud referred to his white patients as "negroes" (signifying their regressed status) and characterized the contents of the unconscious as an "aboriginal population." That the example of the master spread far and wide is clear from clinical tracts of Freud's day, some of which speculated on the incapacity of blacks to be analyzed, their propensity to regress, and their arrested development.

Brickman's reliance on the development of anthropological thought affords her an opportunity to reframe the history of psychoanalytic theorizing about religion. If Freud was misguided in utilizing the armchair anthropology of his day, so too does Brickman find fault with more contemporary theorists like Ana-Maria Rizzuto and W. W. Meissner. The latter, whom Brickman links to midcentury functional and structural anthropology (both replaced theorizing about origins with a concern for function and adaptation), still maintain Freud's temporal developmental scheme complete with its recourse to a primitivity laced with racial and evolutionary overtones. Meissner, for example, in correlating developmental stages with the world's religions, links polytheism with primitivity and Christian monotheism with psychological maturity. The functionalist psychoanalytic theorists reconfigure, rather than resolve, the implicit racial subtext inherent in Freud's works.

Like a good (psycho)analyst, Brickman's deconstructive project aims not at total negation but in uncovering and working through the culturally unconscious dimensions of psychoanalytic thought and practice. Freud may have been misguided, but psychoanalytic thought has progressed, and Brickman, in championing contemporary postcolonial, postmodern anthropological thought, finds a suitable psychoanalytic partner in contemporary relational and intersubjective theory, where interpretation and understanding are not imposed but negotiated, where the dominance and authority of the analyst is subject to criticism and monitored by self-reflection, and where the process of healing and creation of meaning is coconstructed.

While the book (the primary aim of which is to eradicate every last trace of the influence of Freud and his racist subtext on future psychoanalytic endeavors) ends here, it is also here that one finds the greatest import for the psychoanalytic study of religion. Although Brickman's incisive and convincing analysis is not designed to address the emerging cadre of scholars engaged in comparativist studies (e.g., Sudhir Kakar, Jeffrey Rubin, Jeffrey Kripal) who are carving out a truly postmodern, postcolonial form of applied psychoanalysis, her work can only buttress this trend—one which demands that future psychoanalytic analyses must be reflexive and acknowledge the cultural relativity of its implicit normative views of health, gender, and development. Indeed, keeping in mind the supposed "primitive" elements of meditative states and their associated mystical practices, psychoanalysis must eventually acknowledge the limitations of its models of the mind and therapeutic practices. To be precise: psychoanalysis is destined to become the analysand.

WILLIAM B. PARSONS, *Rice University*.

OHLY, FRIEDRICH. *Sensus Spiritualis: Studies in Medieval Significs and the Philology of Culture*. Edited by SAMUEL P. JAFFE. Translated by KENNETH J. NORTHCOTT. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. xviii+403 pp. \$55.00 (cloth).

This book contains translations of seven studies—lectures and articles—written by the distinguished German philologist Friedrich Ohly (1914–96) between 1958 and 1982. A fascinating preface by Ohly, based on a preface to his *Ausgewählte und neue Schriften zur Literatur und Bedeutungsforschung* (1995), indicates that the translator and the editor had the project for *Sensus Spiritualis* well in hand a decade before the book appeared. As the editor's foreword and epilogue indicate, the seeds of the volume were planted in the intellectual regard that took Ohly to the University of Chicago as a visiting professor (1956–57) and that deepened through the years with friendship.

The selection of studies is discerning; the translation, a triumph of elegance and *sprezzatura* for which English readers should be more grateful than they may know. The volume will do much to reenforce the study of the history of ideas at a moment when its initiators have passed from the scene and various schools of postmodern criticism have undercut its working propositions and the normative place of classical philology from which they derive. And yet, the enormous labor of translating and publishing studies between one and two generations old deserves some reflection.

Numerous observations suggest themselves. The first is that these little monographs enrich discourse about Western European intellectual culture in the hostile environment of the twentieth century. Nazism violently disrupted Ohly's student years (1942–44). The continuing protection he received from his teachers could not shield him from forms of retaliation visited on Ohly as a political dissenter, conscription into the German army, and, eventually, posting to the Russian front. Captured there, he remained in Soviet prisons for nine years (1944–53), subject to horrendous physical suffering and mental anguish from relentless Communist indoctrination. When he returned to western Germany, he was able to resume his academic career and, with exemplary speed, to publish two related works that earned him a role in international scholarly discourse. By far the longer was his *Habilitationsschrift*, a study of medieval exegeses on the Song of Songs; the second was a distillation of his findings in the longer study, a programmatic statement for what he called *Bedeutungsgeschichte* ("the history of meaning," or, as the translator prefers, "significs"), the essay included in this collection under the title "On the Spiritual Sense of the Word in the Middle Ages." Forty years of an exemplary and richly honored career remained, continuing after Ohly's retirement from the University of Münster (1982).

Social and personal devastation converged with intervals of privilege in Ohly's formative professional years. From this crucible, he carried, with firm dedication, a clear sense of his life's work, supported by the "thought that scarcely anyone else would do what [he] was doing." Despite his self-conscious idiosyncrasy, he never felt alone. His task was to pursue "rays of humanity in the darkness of history," above all in the timeless need and search for meaning. His methods were philological, and, since he considered philologists guardians of collective memory and thereby "preservers of human culture," his duties were also historical, to act "with reverence" toward the legacy entrusted by the past to the present. He was, he said, driven by curiosity into what he considered new areas of investigation. All the same, even toward the end of his life, he

believed that, in an era of radical changes in theory and method, his own intellectual orientations and practices—"the physiognomy of [his] scholarly character"—had remained unchanged. His examination of verbal metaphors as vessels of meaning was of a piece with his analyses of pictorial evidence. In his mind, he practiced philology as an "aesthetic science," always looking with a power resembling Schleiermacher's divinatory intuition "beneath the surface of what has been said" to understand human understanding and, in some way, to "prepare a ground for righteousness" (xiii–xvii, 370–71, 380–82).

His own preoccupations drew him to a "spirit become form" in the Middle Ages and prevailing, he thought, from the twelfth century well into the eighteenth. He deliberately avoided subjects that cumulative scholarly efforts had made ready for exhaustive analyses and chose instead unexplored ones that, though small, opened up the general in the particular. As a result, he considered that he had denied himself the broad conjectures of a magnum opus and set his projects in a series of monographic studies. Although written over a space of many years and about diverse subjects, they displayed an "overarching unity," he thought, in the human project of understanding understanding. They also display formidable erudition ranging over the space of seven centuries.

By their arrangement of the seven studies included in his volume, the editor and translator have effectively accented Ohly's comments about unities underlying his diverse studies. Leaving aside chronological order, they open the collection with Ohly's most programmatic statement. They then supply three case studies (in the fields of exegesis, iconography, and architecture) and conclude with three related studies of what Ohly considered the breaking point between the "spirit become form" in the Middle Ages and contemporary European culture. He took, as a paradigm of that transition, the conception of the poet's creative intuition, which for three millennia was believed to come by divine inspiration and, by the late eighteenth century, was located in suffering, even in the philologist's custodianship of memory.

The results of Ohly's investigations deserve to reach even wider audiences than before through these translations. Inevitably, they will also provoke in the minds of scholars and informed general readers questions inaccessible before the advent of postmodern criticism, questions that, with all his gifts, even Ohly could not have anticipated. Entire subjects such as gender and the politics of interpretation raised up and developed since Ohly's death will be in their minds. Ohly's self-possessed conviction of the immutability of his own "scholarly character" may sound a self-deceptive, positivist illusion. Most of all, his assumption of unities underlying verbal and visual expressions between the twelfth and the eighteenth centuries, overriding contradictions and inconsistencies in the evidence, stands very much at odds with critical theory that takes for granted the self-subversive mendacity of language and searches out discontinuities, multiple conflicting paradigms, and non sequiturs as outcroppings of subterranean discords denied, concealed, and betrayed by discourse. Some such gaps between generations of critics are related to allegations, against which the editor extensively defends Ohly, that his assessments are weakened by his failure to acknowledge, much less to take into account, the malice in medieval culture conspicuous, for example, in anti-Semitism (386–91). Perhaps, in assessing Ohly, contemporary critics will also assess themselves.

KARL F. MORRISON, *Rutgers University*.

BACH, ALICE. *Religion, Politics, Media in the Broadband Era*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2004. x+190 pp. \$19.95 (paper).

The author claims at the outset of her book that the ever-diversifying media spectrum of our time is "imbued with subtle and blatant religious imagery" (1). The particular focus she brings to bear on this emergent field is actually more specific than the title conveys. As a longtime biblical scholar and, more lately, a "fool for media," Alice Bach is interested in the interrelatedness of politics, media, and the Bible. The cases treated in the book are predominantly drawn from the U.S. context, even though their reverberations may be felt more globally.

The work has a narrative, and, at times, very personal, quality, as she engages in a series of ruminations and revelations about the growing imbrications of religion and media. She is particularly attuned to the world of popular culture, with her passion for film underpinning the whole book. One of the values of the work is the author's reflections on how she felt impelled to develop new analytic skills to make sense of these more public and popular forms of religion. She is adamant that the new paradigms of power and expression generated by new media challenge the tradition of "studying biblical and other religious texts as privileged or apart from the larger body of cultural productions" (4). Building on this salutary perspective, she demonstrates convincingly, for the most part, how the textual, theological, and historical skills of a biblical scholar may be highly illuminating of popular novels, music, television programs, and films. She characterizes this approach as "breakthrough" (7) and "border-crossing" (2).

With regard to structure, the chapters on Martin Bernal and the *Black Athena* controversy and on women and resistance are engaging, indeed compelling, but seem a stretch in terms of the initial framing of the work. In terms of style, Bach's writing is open, jaunty, even whimsical at times. She clearly enjoys coining turns of phrase with some shock or humorous element, such as "freeze-dried faith," "low-carb biblical buffoonery," "tramping through the tropes" or shedding "the burqa of theory."

The reader should be prepared to entertain a good deal of trenchant commentary from the author on political and social issues, as well as on the successes and failures of all those engaged in the business of the interpretation of religion in a mass-mediated, if not media-saturated, age—be they academics or journalists. She does not mince words when assessing the cinematic readings by biblical scholars of the "sword and sandal" film genre (41) or the mushy morality of "Veggie Tales." She is also at pains to contextualize the objects of her gaze, which proves expedient in understanding the Christianization of Hollywood biblical epics in terms of minority Jewish producers, McCarthyism, and American exceptionalism, for example, as well as the political and cultural discourses of American evangelicals, particularly since 9/11. There is a lot to process, but clearly Bach is both stimulated and overwhelmed by the chaotic complexity of media sources to examine in her new academic incarnation, and she often stops to compare this to the regularity of studying ancient texts.

Even if Bach's efforts to broaden the academic bandwidth of her colleagues in the academic study of the Bible may be less revolutionary than she might hope for, it would behoove many of those scholars to take heed of her pedagogical experiences in linking biblical ideas and popular media. While the book may not offer the type of theoretical analysis or ethnographic or histor-

ical study that more specialized analysts of religion and media would wish to engage, it augurs well for how nonspecialists of media can recast their teaching and scholarship in response to the new contours of our media age. The author's insightful analysis of popular media figures, events, and products in the light of biblical scholarship is also a strong reminder that this type of disciplinary lens should not be sidelined by more general analyses of religious symbols and phenomena or, worse, by religiously or culturally indifferent media studies. This is particularly evident in the author's treatment of women as subjects, or, more accurately, as female stereotypes in the American mass media. This is Bach, the feminist biblical scholar, at her most incisive. At the very least, for those engaged in the analysis of religion more generally, whether as academics or journalists, the book makes interesting reading for the light it sheds on one thoughtful and honest scholar's trajectory in the broadband era, as well as on the production and reception of some recent popular cultural "classics" such as *The Passion of the Christ* film and the *Left Behind* novels.

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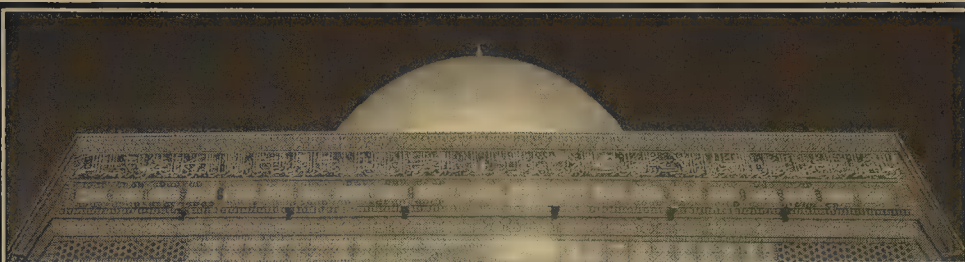
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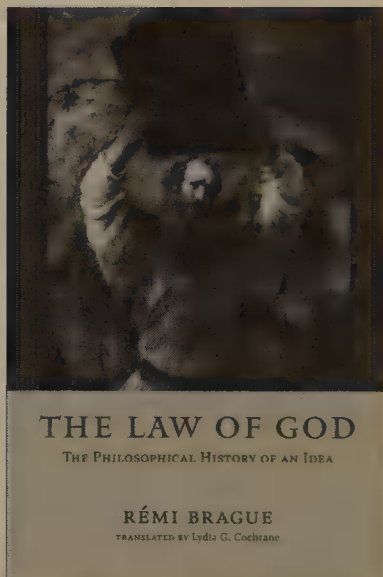
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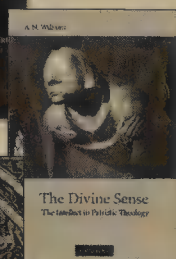
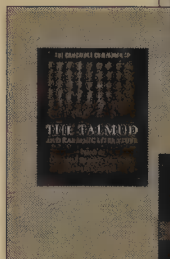
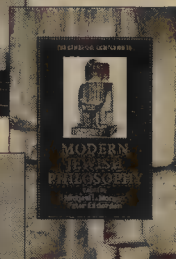
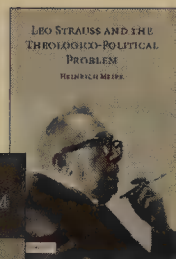
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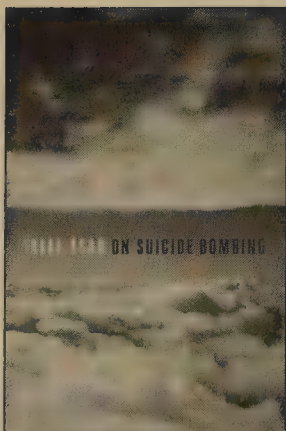
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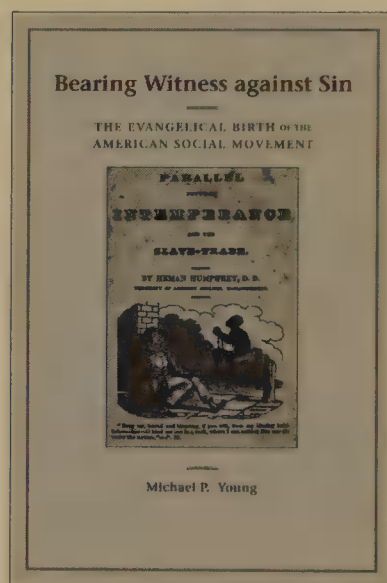
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Translating Time: The Nature and Function of Joseph Smith's Narrative Canon*

Kathleen Flake / Vanderbilt University

Luther nailed his complaints to the door and the church fathers countered with decrees of anathema. In such exchanges of creedal statement and dogmatic restatement, most of modern Christianity has formed and reformed itself. Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, wrote stories, however. Not surprisingly, then, it is a literary critic and not a theologian who labels Smith “an authentic religious genius . . . in the possession and expression of what could be called the religion-making imagination.” Indeed, Harold Bloom credits Mormonism’s very survival to “an immense power of the myth-making imagination.”¹ Of course, myth in the sense used here refers not to fiction as the opposite of fact but to highly symbolic narratives that attempt to account for existence by providing a history of divine and human interaction.² This article seeks to illuminate the relationship between Smith’s mythmaking and the nature of Mormonism as a radical adaptation of traditional Christianity.

Analysis of Smith’s writings is dominated by polemics between those within and those antagonistic to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Latter-day Saints), Smith’s largest institutional leg-

* A portion of this article was presented in 2003 to the Yale Conference on “God, Humanity, and Revelation: Perspectives from Mormon Philosophy and History.” I am grateful to Stephen Marini for his helpful comments as conference respondent and to many others who have contributed more informally to the article’s evolution. I thank the Vanderbilt University Divinity School for a teaching leave in support of this project.

¹ Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 96–97.

² Emphasizing as it does the “bond between man and what he considers sacred,” my definition of myth takes its cue from Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (Boston: Beacon, 1967), 5. For an introduction to the question of veracity and myth, including biblical myth, that is as insightful as it is brief, see Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1–7.

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acy.³ Reasons vary, no doubt, for academic aversion to studying Smith's texts. Most obviously, they are numerous, including nearly eight hundred pages of published revelations that comprise the LDS scriptural canon.⁴ There is also Mark Twain's famous judgment that at least some of it is "chloroform in print."⁵ Scholars themselves are famous, however, for thriving on what bores others. The more probable barrier to academic interest in Smith's writings is the purported otherworldliness of their production. Golden plates, seer stones, Egyptian mummies, and a who's who of biblical and nonbiblical angelic messengers have a decidedly chilling effect on scholars of American religion, except as a lens for psychological analysis.⁶ The manner in which confessional function and mystical production merge in LDS canon is a further deterrent. The question of Smith's veracity as a prophet was, from the beginning, inseparable from his production of text.⁷

Whatever the cause, it remains the case that the academy tends to give Smith's writings short shrift, if not a wide berth, and to focus on Smith's personal history or thought world.⁸ Even Bloom's effort "to

³ A comprehensive bibliography of both sides of the polemic, as well as independent scholarship on the varieties of Mormonism, is found in James B. Allen, Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker, *Studies in Mormon History, 1830–1997: An Indexed Bibliography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

⁴ The LDS Church's canon consists of (1) the King James Version of the Bible as edited by Smith; (2) the Book of Mormon; (3) The Pearl of Great Price, a collection of Smith's revelations, including the Book of Abraham and an account of Smith's early revelatory experiences; and (4) the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, a compilation of Smith's revelations concerned primarily with the organization of the church. The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is Smith's most discursive scripture. Even so, it too suggests the importance of historical narrative to Mormonism by introducing each revelation with a paragraph concerning its historical context, including description of relevant persons and events that induced the revelation on a specified date.

⁵ Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing, 1872), 127: "The book [of Mormon] is a curiosity to me, it is such a pretentious affair, and yet so 'slow,' so sleepy, such an insipid mess of inspiration. It is chloroform in print."

⁶ First published in 1945, Fawn M. Brodie's *No Man Knows My History* remains the most popular psychobiography of Smith, as evidenced by Knopf's 1971 publication of an enlarged, second edition. For the most recent example of the genre, see Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 2004). For an analysis of the genre, see D. Michael Quinn, "Biographers and the Mormon 'Prophet Puzzle': 1974–2004," *Journal of Mormon History* 32, no. 2 (2006): 226–45.

⁷ See Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford, 2002), 84, 86–87.

⁸ To the extent that the academy, usually through its historians, has considered Smith's writings, its attention has been limited to the content of the Book of Mormon. See, e.g., Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); and Thomas O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968). The two exceptions to scholarship's exclusive focus on the Book of Mormon are Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: A New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); and Phillip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) and are discussed below.

bring us closer to the workings of religious imagination” relies largely on an analysis of Smith’s personal charisma and the speculative concepts deducible from his narratives. For Bloom, “Joseph Smith, and his life, personality, and visions far transcended his talents at the composition of divine texts.”⁹ Given Smith’s dramatic life and death, there is reason to be interested in the man himself. Smith was twenty-four years old when, in 1830, he published the Book of Mormon and formally organized his followers into a church. Fourteen years, many thousands of believers, multiple wives, three cities, two temples, and one presidential campaign later, Smith was murdered in Illinois. Likewise, his theological concepts, including as they did plural marriage, premortal existence, and deification, to name a few, differed enough from Western Christian tradition to warrant attention. Ultimately, however, neither Smith’s life nor his speculative thought is sufficient to explain the nature or continuing vitality of either the LDS Church or its critics—at least, that is the argument of this article, which, presuming to begin where Bloom leaves off, looks to the mythos to explain the man, not vice versa.

By considering the narrative function of Smith’s writings, I hope to show the extent to which Smith’s reappropriation of the biblical story competed with traditional Christian theologies, offering his believing readers a particular-to-them sense of time and, consequently, a sense of what is real. My analysis begins, however, with the classic religious studies question: how may Smith’s writings be adequately understood independent of the faith claim they make upon believers? My approach relies upon Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of revelation, as well as his writings on time and narrative that provide a model for placing reason and revelation in conversation to “engender something like an understanding of faith.”¹⁰ Here, the “something like” is based on an analysis of Smith’s self-understanding as a translator and the relation of that self-understanding to the texts he produces.

The second portion of the article turns to the narrative content and style of these texts to demonstrate how they leverage the form, sub-

⁹ Bloom, *American Religion*, 82; see also 97, 104–8. For the most recent biography, see Richard Lyman Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005).

¹⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Lewis S. Mudge (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 73. My arguments throughout rely heavily on Ricoeur’s work distinguishing between philosophical and religious language. More specifically, I employ his concept that the revelatory capacity of religious narrative is not measured by its source but by its function. Thus, the question is not whether the author is inspired but, rather, does the text illuminate reality through the world it offers the reader and does it obtain a response in the lived experience of not merely an individual but a community of readers who find in the text a livable future. See, inter alia, Paul Ricoeur, “Philosophy and Religious Language,” in *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 35–47.

stance, and authority of the biblical myth to subvert definitive aspects of traditional Christianity.¹¹ My hypothesis is that Smith's religion-making success is related to his having deployed the formal attributes of narrative to challenge the Christian tradition in ways not possible through discursive debate or speculative theology. As myths that seek to explain human existence, the definitive function of Smith's stories is "one of cosmicization; of giving meaning and shape to the world; of stating what is really real, self-founded."¹² As such, Smith's narrative elaboration on Christian scripture constituted a competing myth that, true to its genre, "recalibrated categories and redistributed privilege."¹³

Specifically, I will attempt to show that Smith's biblically based narratives recalibrated traditional Christianity's theology of human creation, fall, and salvific potential, as it relates to the origin and end of evil. As such, Smith's new mythos overtly redistributed the privilege central to both Jewish and Christian biblical myth: the capacity to know God, as expressed most directly in Exodus 19 and John 17. To state these aspects of Smith's work discursively obscures the narrative forms in which they are communicated to and function among believing readers. Again, though necessitated at times by the analytical approach of the article, reducing Smith's event-driven narratives to propositional statements is alien to the religious system he created. Thus, I conclude with a discussion of the function of Smith's narratives in creating a livable future for his believing readers.

As with other myths that have founded a sense of peoplehood, Smith's narrative history of human and divine interaction is ultimately oriented to a future time that serves as a basis for acting in the present. Like much American religion, however, Mormonism did not seek to transcend time but to capture the eternal in time or, in religious terms, to build Zion. Smith's narratives provide, in the story of Enoch, the model of the Latter-day Saint version of this endeavor and convey the deep differences between LDS and traditional Christian theological anthropologies. Hence, a few words about Zion, as a realizable future, will be in order.

Necessarily brief, these comments on Mormonism's sense of time—or, more specifically, its sense of a history oriented to a future aeon—

¹¹ This will require me to deduce theology from narrative but only as a means to compare Latter-day Saint and traditional Christian thought. Otherwise, it would not be possible to compare the apples of Smith's stories with the oranges of traditional Christian philosophy.

¹² W. Taylor Stevenson, "Myth and the Crisis of Historical Consciousness," in *Myth and the Crisis of Historical Consciousness*, ed. L. W. Gibbs and W. T. Stevenson (Missoula: University of Montana and Scholars Press, 1975), 5.

¹³ Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 216.

illustrate the way in which Smith's narratives contribute to the capacity of the Latter-day Saints to constitute and reconstitute themselves and their church in the face of changing circumstances, including the recent international composition of its membership. Ultimately, I argue that Smith's narratives provide a world of meaning by which his believing readers understood and continue to understand themselves existentially in terms of a global future and not merely their American past.

I. TRANSLATING TIME

"Recourse to documents signals a dividing line between history and fiction," observed Ricoeur when considering the difference between stories granted the status of depicting past fact and those deemed the exclusive product of human imagination.¹⁴ Joseph Smith's work clearly illustrates this elementary point in the extent to which he claims to translate from documentary sources, and his followers rely on these claims for their sense of the historicity of his work. It is just as clear, however, that Smith straddled this line and tested the already permeable boundaries between history and fiction, as well as their corollaries: translation and creation, reason and revelation.

The first and best known of Smith's publications was a narrative of epic scale and purportedly based on a record engraved on ancient metal plates. The record was translated by Smith, and the plates were then returned to the angel from whence they came. A nearly six-hundred-page story of a people's "bond with the sacred," the Book of Mormon begins with an account of an Israelite family's flight from sixth-century BCE Jerusalem and subsequent establishment of a civilization in the Western Hemisphere.¹⁵ The story climaxes in Christ's postresurrection appearance and organization of his church there. The story ends circa 400 CE with the destruction of the civilization through sin-induced warfare. Still the sine qua non of Smith's prophetic claims, more than 129 million copies of the Book of Mormon have been published in 105 languages since 1830.¹⁶

Smith published also an account of Abram's struggle against idolatry in Ur and his vision of the heavens that would make him Israel's pa-

¹⁴ Paul Ricoeur, "Narrated Time," in *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, ed. Mario J. Valdés (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 346.

¹⁵ Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, 5.

¹⁶ This figure is as of December 31, 2005, and accounts only for the LDS Church's dissemination of the book (<http://www.lds.org/newsroom/page/0,15606,4034-1-10-168,00.html>). Figures from the Community of Christ are not available. In 2003, the University of Illinois published a reader's edition for classroom use. The first trade edition of the Book of Mormon was published in 2004 by Doubleday.

triarch and Pharaoh's astronomer. On its title page, the text is denominated "a Translation of some ancient Records . . . writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt."¹⁷ Thus, as with the Book of Mormon, the claim to a historical source was overt. In this case the documents resorted to were purchased by the church in 1835 from the estate of a European adventurer whose American heir brought four mummies and several papyri to Smith to see if he could, as rumor had it, translate hieroglyphs.¹⁸ First published in 1842, the Book of Abraham is today included in the LDS Church's canon and given equal status to the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

Finally, and most important for this analysis, Smith revised the Bible itself, producing what is most commonly called the "Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible" (JST). Begun in the summer of 1830 and occupying Smith's time as political and economic exigencies allowed, the "new translation," as he called it, was never published in its entirety during his lifetime and was arguably incomplete at his death in 1844.¹⁹ Smith's changes to the King James Version (KJV) were, however, numerous and ranged from simple grammatical modifications or modernization of archaic words to lengthy additions of new material. Approximately 3,400 verses in the KJV were affected, one-third of which were in the Old Testament and the remaining two-thirds in the New Testament. These changes were embedded directly into the text, not appended as marginalia.²⁰

¹⁷ The Book of Abraham, in *The Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), 29.

¹⁸ A detailed account of the book's exotic history can be found in H. Donl Peterson, *The Story of the Book of Abraham: Mummies, Manuscripts and Mormonism* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1995).

¹⁹ Whether or not Smith completed the project has been a matter of debate among his followers. Compare Robert J. Matthews, "A Plainer Translation," *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible: A History and Commentary* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1985), 207–14; and Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1995), 130–31. For a summary of the problem and its contemporary resolution, see Robert L. Millet, "Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible: A Historical Overview," in *The Joseph Smith Translation: A Restoration of Plain and Precious Things*, ed. M. S. Nyman and R. L. Millet (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1985), 22–49. Generally speaking, however, it is doubtful that Smith considered any of his works finished in the sense that he did not feel free to revisit them at a later date, including after publication. Smith explicitly rejected the notion of inerrancy. See, e.g., Book of Mormon, title page ("And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God.").

²⁰ Matthews (*Plainer Translation*, 253) summarizes these changes in three categories according to their effect: "restorative" of original biblical meaning or material, "inspired commentary," and "harmonization of doctrinal concepts" revealed to Smith. Barlow (*Mormons and the Bible*, 51–52) breaks these categories down further into six types, including the grammatical and commonsensical. For a detailed examination of Smith's approach to the KJV text, see

Primacy of narrativized event over theological idea is characteristic of all of Smith's writings but is most striking when read in the context of an otherwise familiar biblical plot. In the words of one most familiar with it, the JST is an unabashed "recitation of events purporting to be actual historical occurrences. The obvious impression . . . is that the reader is being treated to a record of historic events lost from all other versions of the Bible."²¹ JST Mark's version of the institution narrative is typical. Additions to the KJV are indicated here in italics: "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. *And as oft as ye do this ordinance, ye will remember me in this hour that I was with you and drank with you of this cup, even the last time in my ministry.* Verily I say unto you, *Of this ye shall bear record;* for I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine with you, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. *And now they were grieved and wept over him.*"²² While the theological implications of Smith's changes are profound, they are stylistically subordinated to the narrative event. No attempt is made to elucidate "this hour" for the reader, much less explain the shift of traditional emphasis from the impending cross to the instant meal table or the implication that Jesus may yet drink with others. Smith's focus is on events to the exclusion of explanation, but the result is no less theologically significant to Christian tradition.

Because of concerns over the reliability of available manuscripts for the JST, only Smith's revisions to the first six chapters of Genesis were given canonical status by the Latter-day Saints prior to the late twentieth century. These six chapters, as well as an introductory chapter of entirely new material, were printed in church periodicals during Joseph Smith's lifetime. Beginning in 1851, after being included with other of his revelations in a compendium titled *The Pearl of Great Price*, JST Genesis was widely circulated among church members. In 1880, these same chapters were formally canonized as "the Book of Moses" and printed in copies of LDS scriptures. Thus, like the Book of Mormon's Israelite exodus to America, the JST's creation narrative has always informed the LDS ethos.²³

K. P. Jackson and P. M. Jasinski, "The Process of Inspired Translation: Two Passages Translated Twice in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible," *Brigham Young University Studies* 42, no. 2 (2003): 35–64.

²¹ Matthews, *Plainer Translation*, 246.

²² Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from the JST in this article are taken from Joseph Smith's "New Translation" of the Bible: *A Complete Parallel Column Comparison of the Inspired Version of the Holy Scriptures and the King James Authorized Version* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1970).

²³ Matthews, *Plainer Translation*, 177–206. In 1867, the Community of Christ, then known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day [*sic*] Saints, was the first to publish

In contrast to their canonical status within Mormonism, Smith's texts pose insurmountable problems for those who would verify his claims to have translated them from historical sources. The Book of Mormon purports to be written in "Reformed Egyptian," a language particular to its subject community of exiles and otherwise unknown. Moreover, the absence of its source document makes impossible or at least contextual any scientific verification of its historicity.²⁴ Portions of the Book of Abraham papyri have been available since 1967, but the partial nature of their discovery only guarantees continuation of debate, especially since the discovered parts do not show a direct relation to Smith's translation. Moreover, the hieroglyphics included in Smith's text appear to be edited portions of the Egyptian Book of Breathings and bear interpretations unrelated to the original.²⁵ Thus, notwithstanding the retention of the subtitle "Translated from the papyrus, by Joseph Smith" in its canon, the LDS Church's explanation of the process by which the book was created is that "it was principally divine inspiration rather than his knowledge of languages that produced the English text of the Book of Abraham. His precise methodology remains unknown."²⁶

As for the JST, one need not look far for its source, nor be concerned with Smith's knowledge of ancient languages. It is true that, during a brief hiatus between internecine and external battles, Smith established a "school of the prophets" in the frontier town of Kirtland, Ohio, at which English and Hebrew grammar were studied; the latter because of the serendipitous proximity of Joshua Seixas, author of the 1833

the JST. Initially, its use of the JST was a marker of its claim to be the legitimate (versus the Utah-based LDS Church) heir to Joseph Smith's legacy. Today, the position of each is reversed. In 1981, the more significant portions of the JST, not already published in *The Pearl of Great Price*, were published as notes to the LDS edition of the KJV, resulting in the canonization of the JST nearly a century and a half after its production. A comparison of the evolving positions of the Community of Christ and the LDS Church is found in Thomas E. Sherry, "Changing Attitudes toward Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible," in *Plain and Precious Truths Restored*, ed. R. L. Millet and R. J. Matthews (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 187–212. For an account of the LDS Church's 1981 canonization of the JST, see Robert J. Matthews, "The New Publications of the Standard Works—1979, 1981," *Brigham Young University Studies* 22, no. 4 (1982): 287–424.

²⁴ For contemporary efforts to validate the historicity of Smith's texts, see the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies at Brigham Young University at <http://farms.byu.edu/>.

²⁵ For a description of the eleven fragments from the Leblo papyri and their significance, see John A. Wilson, "A Summary Report," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 2 (1968): 68–85; and Klaus Baer, "The Breathing Permit of Hor: A Translation of the Apparent Source of the Book of Abraham," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 3 (1968): 109–33. For a more recent critical analysis of the text in light of the discovered papyri, see Stephen E. Thompson, "Egyptology and the Book of Abraham," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 28, no. 1 (1995): 143–60.

²⁶ *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), s.v. "Translation and Publication of The Book of Abraham" (by H. Donl Peterson).

Manual Hebrew Grammar for the Use of Beginners. Whatever mastery Smith achieved over his native tongue, the consensus is that his command of Hebrew was rudimentary. More to the point, his use of it has been deemed more imaginative than expert. "I simply do not think he cared to appear before the world as a meticulous Hebraist," concluded a modern scholar. Rather, Smith "used the Hebrew as he chose, as an artist, inside his frame of reference, in accordance with his taste, according to the effect he wanted to produce, as a foundation for theological innovations."²⁷ It is unnecessary to speculate on Smith's linguistic capacities, however, because Smith's translation of the Bible is based on an 1828 edition of the KJV, printed by H. and E. Phinney of Cooperstown, New York. As a source document for Smith's translation, the Phinney edition was not only in Smith's native tongue, but already cured of many obsolete words, as well as archaic spellings and pronouns.²⁸ Nevertheless, as indicated above, the JST was titled and uniformly referred to by Smith as a "translation of the scriptures."²⁹ As such, the JST constitutes Smith's most obvious transgression of the common understanding of what it means to translate.

Though in 1815, one could be directed to "a place near Monmouth-street, where 'they translate old shoes into new ones,'" it is doubtful that one could properly "renovate, turn, or cut down . . . or make new [Bibles] from the remains of (old ones)."³⁰ This was unthinkable at best, heresy at worst, and certainly not "translation." Because religious diversity made heresy an elusive concept in early nineteenth-century America, most of his contemporaries had to settle for labeling Smith a fraud. Sensitive as he was to these charges and no doubt knowing the difference between shoes and Bibles, Smith's stubbornly persistent use of "translation" to describe the process by which he created his texts invites analysis. Specifically, it invites consideration of what about the term Smith found pertinent to his experience, notwithstanding its obvious impertinences. Such an approach holds the possibility of getting past the tendency to polemics caused by taking Smith's claim to translate at face value and, as I hope to show, reveals an instructive tension in Smith's choice of the term. Staying in that tension and not seeking

²⁷ Louis C. Zucker, "Joseph Smith as a Student of Hebrew," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 2 (1968): 41–55, 53.

²⁸ For details on the KJV edition used by Smith, see Kent P. Jackson, "Joseph Smith's Cooperstown Bible," *Brigham Young University Studies* 40, no. 1 (2001): 41–70.

²⁹ For Smith's characterization of his task as a translation, see B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 1:238–39, 341. See also the Doctrine and Covenants 73:4, 76:15, 90:13, and 124:89.

³⁰ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "translate."

quick release in claims of mendacity or prophecy provides reason some access to Smith's faith.

Contemporaneous sources indicate that Smith made his more extensive changes to KJV Genesis by employing the same methods as when working from records purportedly written in ancient languages. Smith is quoted as saying: "After I got through translating the Book of Mormon, I took up the Bible to read with the Urim and Thummim. I read the first chapter of Genesis, and I saw the things as they were done, I turned over the next and the next, and the whole passed before me like a grand panorama; and so on chapter after chapter until I read the whole of it. I saw it all!"³¹ A more authoritative account is provided by Smith himself in February 1832. "Upon my return from Amherst [Massachusetts] conference, I resumed the translation of the Scriptures. . . . While translating St. John's Gospel, myself and Elder Rigdon saw the following vision" of the resurrection of the dead.³² Finally, in an 1843 funeral sermon, probably alluding to the account in Matt. 27:52 of graves opening at the death of Jesus, Smith spoke of "the visions that roll like an overflowing surge, before my mind." More specifically, he said, "I saw the graves open & the saints as they arose took each other by the hand . . . while setting up."³³ Thus, although many emendations are editorial, the more radical of Smith's changes to the Bible were understood by him as a function of what he saw when reading it.

³¹ Joseph Smith, as quoted by Lorenzo Brown in "Sayings of Joseph, by Those Who Heard Him at Different Times," Joseph Smith Jr. Papers, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, UT. Brown's statement is based on his recollection in 1880 of a conversation that occurred in 1832. For questions concerning the reliability of this account, see Matthews, *Plainer Translation*, 25–26, n. 12. Referred to in Exod. 28:30 and Lev. 8:8 as an object placed in "the breastplate of judgment," *urim* and *thummim* are the transliterations of the Hebrew words for "light" and "perfection." For the only major study of the subject since 1824, see Cornelis Van Dam, *The Urim and Thummim: A Means of Revelation in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997). Van Dam (*Urim and Thummim*, 232) rejects the traditional view that the urim and thummim was a type of lot oracle and argues that it was a single gem, "a miraculous authenticating light," that shone to verify divine revelation to the high priest. Joseph Smith described his apparatus as "two transparent stones set in the rim of a [silver] bow fastened to a breast plate" that came into his possession with the golden plates for the purpose of translating the Book of Mormon; see *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (1842): 707. See also *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. "Urim and Thummim" (by Paul Y. Hoskisson). For a discussion of the role of divining instruments in Smith's production of the Book of Mormon, see D. Michael Quinn, *Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1998), 169–75. Later, Smith would say that, as he became more experienced at the process of translating, he no longer needed mechanical aids; see Matthews, *Plainer Translation*, 25, 40.

³² The specific verse in question was John 5:29. See Roberts, *History of the Church*, 1:245–52. See also Doctrine and Covenants 76.

³³ Joseph Smith, "Discourse" (April 16, 1843), in *Words of Joseph Smith*, ed. Lyndon Cook and Andrew F. Ehat (Provo, UT: Grandin Book, 1991), 196, 198.

At least with respect to the JST, it appears that when he read he saw events, not words. What he saw, he verbalized to a scribe.³⁴

One of Smith's Book of Mormon scribes provided, in his own failed attempt to translate, the occasion for the most direct description of Smith's method. "You have not understood," God told Oliver Cowdery through Smith: "you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me. But . . . you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right and . . . you shall feel that it is right. But if it is not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget that thing which is wrong; therefore you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me."³⁵ Cowdery appears to have thought he could engage in the "inspired translation" of the Book of Mormon by parroting God's reading. In contrast, as implied by the above statement, Smith believed it necessary to determine independently how to represent what he read or saw. The appropriate question to God by the prophet-translator was whether his interpretation was correct, not what God's interpretation was.

Arguably, then, "translate" expressed Smith's experience of "study[ing] it out in [his] mind" or his sense of agency in front of the text. Smith did not think of himself as God's stenographer. Rather, he was an interpreting reader, and God the confirming authority. He did not experience revelation "as dictated, as something whispered in someone's ear" and, thus, provides a useful illustration of Ricoeur's argument that revelation is not propositional but "pluralistic, polysemic, and at most analogical in form."³⁶ Of equal significance, however, is the manner in which Smith's description of revelation communicates a sense of being limited by a text. It was possible to not "be right" in one's reading. Smith experienced revelation as an interpretive response to the text: not freely associated from, but bound by the "world of the text" in front of him, even if in an altered mental state or vision. In sum, Smith's use of "translate," for all its discursive weaknesses, conveyed his experience of creative agency before a text and,

³⁴ For a description of the experience from the scribe's point of view, see Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps, September 7, 1834, in *The Improvement Era* 2, no. 3 (1899), and excerpted in "Joseph Smith—History: Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet," in *The Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City, UT: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), 58 n.

³⁵ Oliver Cowdery, *Messenger and Advocate* (Kirtland, OH) 1, no. 1 (1834): 14, as quoted in *Doctrine and Covenants* 9:7–9.

³⁶ Paul Ricoeur, "Toward a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation," in *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Lewis S. Mudge (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 74, 76.

simultaneously, his sense of being bound by the text as an account of events or as history.³⁷ Taking the most obvious example, it can be said that, notwithstanding its English source, the JST asks to be understood as a translation, because it does not arise out of the infinite variations available to fiction but, rather, within the limits of an existing narrative of past events.

In Smith's usage, "translate" is best understood as a metaphor whose "clash between semantic fields" creates a third valence—"a pertinence within impertinence"—that illuminates Smith's method by contrasting the ways in which it was both like and not like translating.³⁸ His reading and writing of sacred text was like translating insofar as Smith was "study[ing] it out in [his] mind" in response to a source document. It is not like translating insofar as Smith made large additions to his sources and claimed for them the historicity of the original. In the contrast, another meaning arises that depends upon the recognition of the metaphor's incongruity, namely, Smith's claim of power as a prophet to rewrite the prophets. In other words, as with all metaphors, Smith's "translate" requires that one "continue to perceive the previous incompatibility through the new compatibility" of what Smith was signifying about both himself as prophet and his texts as scripture. For his believing readers, these contraries combine to express Smith's prophetic authority to divine the truth about God's past acts within the narrative limits of ancient, prophetic history. For the academic reader, these contraries suggest an imagination both governed by text and productive of it, reconfiguring the past to suggest what could be, to even create the possible and the real.

Each of Smith's works is an elaboration on climactic moments in the

³⁷ For another explanation of Smith's approach to the Bible, see Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 57–61; my emphasis, however, is on the extent to which Smith felt bound by the text, even as he changed it (see *ibid.*, 61). Moreover, Barlow explains Smith's approach to the text largely in terms of contemporary practices that did not distinguish authors from editors, arguing that Smith used these conventions "creatively" and consistent with "prophetic writers of ancient times." My differences with this argument are slight and result primarily from my emphasis on those sections of the JST that are not merely editorial, but radical reformulations of the biblical narrative. I believe these additions are too extensive to be rationalized by nineteenth-century editorial conventions, especially given the Bible's near-fetishistic canonical status during this period. Finally, though I, too, consider ancient "bible writers" to be a useful analogy to Smith's production of new text, I do not ground the analogy in Smith's felt sense of "godly authority or insight" or "concern . . . with enlightening the world through revealed truth" (*ibid.*, 60–61). These are the elements of Smith's own story which I argue are not necessary to and can obscure the nature and effect of his reformulation of the biblical narrative.

³⁸ For a summary of his theories on the operation of metaphor and the excerpts used here, see Paul Ricoeur, "The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality," in Valdés, *Ricoeur Reader*, 124–25.

Bible story. The main characters in the Book of Mormon are refugees from Palestine immediately prior to the Babylonian assault who ensure the continuation of Israel's covenant by taking it to the Western hemisphere. Escaping foreign captivity and domestic colonization by successive imperial reigns and creating a parallel story to the Jewish diaspora and Christian synthesis, the Book of Mormon peoples received the resurrected Christ and the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. This same promise is the centerpiece of Smith's Book of Abraham and becomes the occasion to provide an alternative account of human origins in creation, as well as of Israel's origins in the Abrahamic covenant. Most aggressively, in the first six chapters of JST Genesis, Smith wrests the entire Christian narrative from its traditional moorings, giving it a new beginning and eliding differences between old and new covenants. Among the more audacious changes is the addition of a precreation event into the Genesis narrative and a new "Genesis 1" that ascribes a specific purpose to creation. These changes suggest another metaphor for understanding Smith's "translations."

Today, the Bible itself is believed to be largely the product of periodic manipulation of foundational texts. "Redaction" has become the preferred term for an invasive revision of a source that seamlessly inserts new material in an authoritative text in order to meet new exigencies. Though only a gleam in the eye of the academy at the time Smith was writing and still a source of concern for literalist readers, redaction has become the regnant explanation for the construction of the Bible as having "experienced change, accretions, and reinterpretations as it was being transmitted through centuries."³⁹ Of the Tanach's redactors, it has been said that "what Israel took over was not slavishly copied; Israel transformed what she borrowed by baptizing it into her own faith."⁴⁰ Israel's "baptism" is commonly understood to have been performed by the sixth-century BCE priestly "P" who, inter alia, Judaized his people's Babylonian-informed understanding of human origins.⁴¹ The next section of this article analyzes the JST as an

³⁹ Douglas A. Knight, "Cosmogony and Order in the Hebrew Tradition," in *Cosmogony and Ethical Order: New Studies in Comparative Ethics*, ed. Robin W. Lovin and Frank E. Reynolds (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 137.

⁴⁰ Bernhard W. Anderson, *Creation versus Chaos* (New York: Association Press, 1967), 26.

⁴¹ There are, of course, two creation accounts in the first chapters of Genesis: P's priestly fifth-century version in chap. 1 and J's (or the Yahwist's) ninth-century account in chap. 2. Hermann Gunkel's 1895 assessment of them remains authoritative: "Genesis 1 is related to the poetic recensions [from the Babylonian Marduk myth] somewhat like P in general relates to the parallel traditions in J or E: on the whole a strongly Judaized reworking, sober prose in place of ancient poetry, at the same time a higher view of God replacing an earlier naïveté, and yet also individual features that are very ancient" ("The Influence of Babylonian Mythology

analogous “baptism” of Genesis via Christianity into Mormonism. For purposes of comparison, I rely upon Ricoeur’s typology from *Symbolism of Evil* to identify not only the distinguishing features of P’s redaction but also Christian theologizing upon it.⁴² This allows analysis of Smith’s adaptation of Genesis in light of definitively Christian readings of the same text, namely, doctrines of creation ex nihilo and original sin and shows the means by which Mormonism’s alternative theological anthropology not only is grounded in scriptural authority but is also sustained by narrative devices.

In order to include, in a treatment of this limited page length, sufficient evidence from Smith’s virtually unknown adaptation of Genesis, I assume the reader’s general knowledge of the traditional biblical account and must generalize a Christian consensus regarding God’s sovereignty, human fault, and the origins of sin. I recognize that differences of opinion on these doctrines define many of Christianity’s distinctive denominations. For the purposes of this essay such differences may be treated as nuances in comparison to Smith’s contrary conclusions to certain generalizations shared by Roman, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians, namely, that (1) the world was created from nothing and constituted an expression of God’s absolute goodness; hence, (2) humans, as created beings, are ontologically unrelated to God and brought evil into being by their action.⁴³ The following section analyzes Smith’s redaction of Genesis as a subversion of these classic Christian propositions. The point of this analysis is, however, not to describe the subversion of meaning or the curious changes Smith makes in the Genesis story. Rather, Smith’s version of the story is told to illuminate the mode of his subversion: the manner in which he deploys myth to challenge or, in Lincoln’s terms, “recalibrate” the categories of thought and privileges inherent in the status quo of Christian theologizing on the divine-human relationship.⁴⁴ Subsequent sec-

upon the Biblical Creation Story,” in *Creation in the Old Testament*, ed. Bernhard W. Anderson [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984], 48).

⁴² Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, 171–74.

⁴³ My argument presumes that Smith’s rejection of these precepts, without more, is sufficient to demonstrate Mormonism’s radical diversion from traditional Christian theology, though certainly it may be argued otherwise. See, e.g., the arguments made by Stephen E. Robinson in Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997). But see also the decision of the Society of Christian Philosophers to boycott Brigham Young University and the society’s related decision to establish guidelines for regional meetings, excluding “any institution professing to be Christian while at the same time subscribing to a doctrinal position directly contradicting the ecumenical creeds accepted by all branches of the Christian Church, Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant” (Peggy Fletcher Stack, “Mormon Christian Dialogue?” http://www.beliefnet.com/story/81/story_8179_1.html).

⁴⁴ Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth*, 216 n. 14.

tions consider the relation of Smith's narratives to Mormonism's viability as a livable alternative to the ethos of traditional Christianity.

II. SMITH'S NARRATIVE REBUTTAL TO TRADITIONAL CHRISTIANITY

As conveniently categorized by Ricoeur in his comparisons of pagan and Jewish creation myths, three aspects of Genesis are central to P's monotheistic challenge to his pagan neighbors: Adam's ancestral role as the first human, his defection from God by eating the forbidden fruit, and the subordination of Eve and the serpent to Adam's story.⁴⁵ Together these elements of the Genesis story distinguish it as an anthropomorphic myth that is motivated, Ricoeur argues, by the need to give meaning to the universal human experience of evil while simultaneously upholding Israel's faith in an ethical or good God whose creation is good (not tragic, like that of the Greeks) and good ipso facto (not ordered from chaos, like that of the Babylonians).⁴⁶ The narrative does not fully cooperate with P's argument for the absolute priority of good over evil, however. Both the snake, who appears with the offer of evil, and Eve, who responds to it, imply the existence of evil in creation and prior to human act. Thus, biblical scholarship has postulated that Eve and the snake are marginal figures in Adam's story, even residuals of pagan mythology. While the snake as a demon and Eve, its instrument, express the possibility of evil, they are not necessary to the story, merely adding "enigmatic depth" to the Israelite narrative of Adam's transgression.⁴⁷ Thus interpreted, these same three features of the Genesis account frame the traditional Christian doctrines of creation ex nihilo and original sin. Smith's narrative begins by enlarging the frame and, in doing so, makes ideological space for human participation in the divine nature.

In Smith's redaction of Genesis, people—as uncreated children of

⁴⁵ Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, 232–78.

⁴⁶ Too simply stated, the cosmologies of Israel's neighbors were characterized by gods who either struggled to create order out of chaos (the Babylonians) or disrupted order by tempting and blinding humans (the Greeks). For the former, evil is primordial and salvation from it comes through a "final victory of order over chaos" in creation. For the latter, humans have a tragic fate and their salvation "consists in a sort of aesthetic deliverance issuing from the tragic spectacle itself" (ibid., 172–75). Of course, elements of each these types may be found in the Bible. For example, KJV Rev. 12:7 refers to a "war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels." Similarly, the Book of Job depicts a kind of tragic spectacle precipitated by God's wager with Satan. What is distinctive about the Genesis creation narrative is, however, its abjuring such notions of evil—as either primeval chaos or tragic existence—in order to establish absolutely God's goodness notwithstanding the humanity's universal experience of the "not good."

⁴⁷ Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, 233–35.

God—come first, and the world later. This reversal of events is made by adding to the established narrative an account of a precreation council comprised of spirit persons with form and agency, but not bodies of flesh. According to the JST, God called the council in order to present a plan for the governance of the yet-to-be-created earth, the site of the next progressive state of his gathered children. The positing of this event and its description of premortal existence inevitably contest traditional Christian theology. Imbedded as they are in a narrative, the theological principles at stake in the JST council must be inferred from its drama of a confrontation between God and Lucifer over how to obtain the successful return of earth's future inhabitants from their probationary state, as well as over who would be sent with the power to ensure that result. God had already offered a plan that would give primacy and "honor" to "my beloved Son, which was my beloved and chosen from the beginning." Lucifer, the Son of the Morning, begged to differ and presented himself as an alternative: "Behold I, send me, I will be thy Son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore, give me thine honor."⁴⁸ Though other conversation is described in the council, these are actually the first words quoted from any character. First words are not a given; they are the chosen set point of a story's trajectory. These first words spoken in Smith's narrative stand in powerful contrast to the first words, both chronologically and literally, in traditional Christianity's cosmic history: "Let there be light," says God over a perfect creation, into which evil has yet to appear and, when it does, comes as a result of human action. These words communicate that God has power over evil because evil is subordinate to—or comes after and is foreign to—God's absolutely original and fundamentally good creation. In contrast, Smith's addition of the premortal council to the traditional Genesis narrative teaches that the option of evil existed, as did humans, primordially or prior to earthly creation.

The JST narrative implies three reasons for God's rejection of Lucifer's alternative. Most obviously, it constituted rebellion in its antagonism to God's plan and in its demand for "God's own power." There was also a third, more substantive problem, however. Lucifer's proposed means of ensuring that "not one soul would be lost" was meant to "[destroy] the agency of man." Since, in this cosmology, there is no existence without agency, Lucifer's plan would have made God's plan

⁴⁸ JST Gen. 3:2–3.

a nullity.⁴⁹ Thus, in Smith's cosmology evil as the possibility of defection from God is present from the beginning and prior to the world's creation. Of course, this means also that creation is not *ex nihilo*. As such, the myth recalibrates the created-uncreated dichotomy fundamental to the Christian tradition's definition of human unrelatedness to the divine. More will be said of this in a moment. For now, we return to the story.

Smith's recounting of the temptation of Eve and Adam in the garden is fairly traditional, but as a consequence of evil's role in the premortal council, the serpent's subtle nature and malicious intent is not a surprise to the reader. Or, to use Ricoeur's term, evil does not appear to "happen" to Eve and Adam. The serpent's invitation to rebellion is simply Lucifer pursuing his earlier, failed agenda. This point is impressed upon the reader by the fact that the JST story of the council is inserted into the traditional Genesis narrative immediately after the command to humans not to eat of the fruit and before the serpent makes his entrance. As such, the council story explains God's command and does so in the context of an additional instruction to Adam and Eve: "nevertheless thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it."⁵⁰ The narrative effect of this addition is to explain the serpent's existence in the garden and the KJV's characterization of it as "more subtle than any beast in the field which the Lord God had made."⁵¹ The inference of this observation is made explicit in the JST: evil precedes creation. This requires Smith's narrative to also confront directly the problem of the existence of evil in an otherwise good creation.

Among the options he does not take are the alternatives to the Priestly redactor: a cosmogonic or tragic ethos. The JST does not portray earth's creation as the "final victory of order over chaos" after a cosmic battle among the gods. Rather, the JST maintains the Bible's distinctive provision of a primordial ancestor "whose condition is homogeneous with ours."⁵² Adam, and in Smith's narrative one must also include Eve and the snake (as Lucifer), stood with the rest of future

⁴⁹ Smith would later elaborate discursively on these ideas first expressed narratively: "Man was also in the beginning with God. . . . not created or made. . . . independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence. Behold here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man; because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light" (Doctrine and Covenants 93:29–31).

⁵⁰ KJV Gen. 2:17.

⁵¹ KJV Gen. 3:1.

⁵² Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, 175.

humanity, watched or participated in the debate and made their respective choices. As important, victory over evil is not final. Smith's god is not a Marduk who vanquished evil and, thereby, achieved order in the end (as creation). Smith's god is sovereign from the uncreated beginning: Lucifer is cast out of heaven summarily, as well as subject to God's adjudication of the parties to the fall. Moreover, notwithstanding its a priori existence, evil in the JST is not tragically "the very worldliness of the world . . . the state of being in the world, the misfortune of existing."⁵³ God's creative act remains radically separate from evil that is now "cast down" and must find a way back into relation with these beings in order to disrupt God's good work. Thus, in the JST, the struggle between good and evil is both cosmological and existential: it is, we shall see, considered constitutive of human agency. God's goodness and sovereignty is measured by the power to redeem human agents in extremis, not the power to create them ex nihilo.⁵⁴

Smith's redaction of Genesis continues to emphasize that choice is manifest and freedom is—temporally at least—absolute. Therefore, the terms under which Adam and Eve occupy the garden differ in the JST. While they are commanded not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they are told also, in contrast to the KJV: "Nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but remember that I forbid it."⁵⁵ As with all narratives, this dialogue requires interpretation and at least two conclusions are possible. One is legalistic. If they "may" choose, then to choose is not disobedient, even when told not to choose. In the larger context of the operation of agency in Smith's cosmology, it is more likely that the "may" refers to a necessary condition of Adam and Eve's existence, not a license to do other than what they had been commanded. This view is supported by the fact that the story of the premortal council, with its emphasis on agency, is inserted in the narrative after God's instruction not to eat the fruit and, as indicated, prior to the serpent's offer of an alternative. Adam and Eve have a choice, but they have also been instructed in the right choice and given an example of the dangers of a wrong choice. Smith's Book of Abraham speaks more obliquely but to the same point and

⁵³ Paul Ricoeur, "'Original Sin': A Story in Meaning," in *The Conflict of Interpretations*, ed. Don Ihde (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 273.

⁵⁴ While in Mormon theology there is no existence without agency, the agency that operates in this world is conditioned by the gift of the atonement of Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon, at 2 Nephi 2:26–27, provides: "because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day. . . . Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient."

⁵⁵ JST Gen. 2:21.

more broadly applied. There God says to the premortal assembly: "Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man. . . . And another answered. . . . And the Lord said: I will send the first. And the second was angry and kept not his first estate; and, at that day, many followed after him."⁵⁶

Not surprisingly, given its overt presence in the JST account of the garden, the nature of evil and its consequences is a large theme in Smith's account of the world's first family. Particular care is taken to reiterate Lucifer's motives to implement his own plan at the expense of God's. The reader is told that Lucifer, now the cast-down Satan, "sought also to beguile Eve, for he knew not the mind of God; wherefore he sought to destroy the world."⁵⁷ Here, to Lucifer's grandiosity and rebellion is added the additional problem of ignorance, that is, he knows not "the mind of God." Thus, in the JST version of the garden, as at the council, Satan is displaying not only malice but also a fundamental misunderstanding of the way life works, when he prompts the serpent to argue, consistent with the KJV: "Ye shall not die . . . ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."⁵⁸ With the council narrative as background, the JST reader sees Satan's approach has not changed and neither has the substance of his offer: death masquerading as power. Evil is rebellion against God's plan and the embracing of its opposite: the voluntary or free adoption of an antiorder that seeks to destroy human freedom in order to obtain power as an end in itself. It is Lucifer, not the fallen Eve or Adam, who conveys the definition of sin and defines it in terms of rebellion as a lust for power obtained at the expense of agency and, thus, life itself. Stated as an abstract principle, it is obvious that this characterization of Satan and his goal are not original to the JST. As Ecclesiastes tells us, there is nothing new under the sun; particularly the religious sun. I do not dispute him. My point here is the manner in which this principle is historicized or realized for the reader by its conveyance through narrative and, more especially, the authorized biblical plot rather than a separate narrative.

Many of Smith's subsequent additions to the KJV plot continue to elaborate by inference on this theology of evil. One more example must suffice: Smith's version of the contest between Cain and Abel. The JST Cain, the firstborn, is introduced to the readers as a disappointment to his parents' hopes that he will not "reject" the Lord, in contrast to his younger brother Abel, who "walked in holiness before the Lord." Cain's first words in the narrative are "Who is the Lord,

⁵⁶ Abraham 3:27–28.

⁵⁷ JST Gen. 3:7.

⁵⁸ JST Gen. 3:11.

that I should know him.” Moreover, Cain’s offering of the first fruits of his field is depicted as a response to Satan’s command, not God’s. When the Lord rejected the offering and accepted Abel’s, Cain was “very wroth,” notes the KJV, and the JST adds: “Now Satan knew this, and it pleased him.”⁵⁹ The addition of the character of Satan to this story continues the theme of choice and agency. Indeed, it may be said that the character of Satan is a foil that offers his own and opposite bond in direct imitation of the sacred in each instance in which he appears to Cain. After the KJV warning that “sin lieth at the door,” the JST has the Lord say to Cain: “Satan desireth to have thee, and except thou shalt hearken unto my commandments, I will deliver thee up, and it shall be unto thee according to his desire.”⁶⁰

At this point in the story, Smith adds eight verses where the KJV makes do with one referencing Cain’s killing of Abel. Smith’s verses provide motive for the crime. Cain, we are told, “listened not any more to the voice of the Lord” and “loved Satan more than God.” As a consequence, Satan invites Cain to enter into a secret covenant “that he would do according to his [Satan’s] commands” and, in exchange, Satan promises “this day I will deliver thy brother Abel into thine hands.” The reversal implicit in this contract is made explicit when Cain rejoices: “Truly I am Mahan, the master of this great secret, that I may murder and get gain . . . and he gloried in his wickedness.” Later, he exults over the body of his brother: “I am free; surely the flocks of my brother falleth into my hands.” The exiled Cain will later teach his Satanic covenant to his sons whose “works were abominations, and began to spread among all.”⁶¹ But, always in Smith’s narrative, individuals are free and capacitated to choose, as is evidenced by the women who resist their husbands’ acceptance of Cain’s antiorder. The secrets of Cain’s order were not shared with the women in the family “because that Lamech [Cain’s fifth generation descendant] had spoken the secret unto his wives, and they rebelled against him, and declared these things abroad, and had not compassion. Wherefore Lamech was despised, and cast out, and came not among the sons of men, lest he should die.”⁶² Thus, for Smith, the potential for evil is coexistent with existence itself, but sin—the embracing of evil and antiorder—came into the world through Cain.

What, then, is Adam and Eve’s contribution to this myth of the origin of evil in the world? The JST account of God’s response to Adam and

⁵⁹ JST Gen. 5:4, 8, and 11.

⁶⁰ KJV Gen. 4:7 and JST Gen. 5:9.

⁶¹ JST Gen. 5: 11, 13–16, 18, and 38–39.

⁶² JST Gen. 5:40–41.

Eve's choice to eat the forbidden fruit is consistent in relevant detail to the KJV story. They are driven from the garden that brought forth its fruit spontaneously into a world that requires their labor to sustain them and the new life they will engender. At this point, however, the JST introduces sixteen verses to the KJV text. These verses emphasize that their exile was not only from ease and painlessness but also from God's presence. Now, instead of God calling upon them, they "called upon the name of the Lord and they heard the voice of the Lord, from the way toward the garden of Eden, speaking unto them. . . . And he gave unto them commandments." Here is the next major turn away from the KJV in the JST narrative, resulting in an addition of 600 words to the text. Exile from God's presence does not put them out of reach of his voice. In Smith's account, Adam and Eve are taught by heavenly messengers to worship God, offer sacrifice, "repent, and call upon God in the name of the Son for evermore." They are further told "as thou hast fallen, thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will."⁶³

Like the Book of Mormon, the JST places the knowledge of Christ and the offer of salvation prior to Jesus's birth. Explicitly, salvation is the plan from the beginning and atonement is God's anticipatory response to human defection. Hence, a BCE figure in the Book of Mormon will explain: "if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end. And they would have . . . remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin. But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things."⁶⁴ What Adam and Eve originate for their progeny is not evil, but death: "by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death."⁶⁵ In the JST narrative, humans are by nature separate, not evil. "The Fall" is not a fall into evil, but into alienation. Adam and Eve's legacy is not to change human nature but, rather, to change the conditions under which that nature will be developed, that is, out of God's presence and in a world where "God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other," according to the Book of Mormon.⁶⁶

⁶³ JST Gen. 4:3–9.

⁶⁴ Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 2:26.

⁶⁵ JST Gen. 6:61.

⁶⁶ Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 2:16.

Later in the JST Genesis narrative, God will mourn in vision to En-och that the antediluvians have failed to “choose me their Father.”⁶⁷ This is the bond with the sacred described in the JST: humans with an uncorrupted but corruptible capacity to know good from evil, placed in an environment that requires them to choose between manifest options. The choice is one of affiliation, of whom to love in an environment that makes one free to choose. On the one hand, “the gospel began to be preached from the beginning, being declared by holy angels, sent forth from the presence of God; and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost. And thus all things were confirmed unto Adam by an holy ordinance; and the gospel preached; and a decree sent forth that it should be in the world until the end thereof.”⁶⁸ On the other hand, “Satan came among them [the children of Adam and Eve], saying I am also a son of God, and he commanded them, saying Believe it [the gospel] not. And they believed it not; and they loved Satan more than God. And men began from that time forth to be carnal, sensual and devilish.”⁶⁹ This is, using Ricoeur’s terms, the occasion for the “servile will, of the bad choice that binds itself.”⁷⁰ Or, as described in the Book of Mormon: “our first parents were cut off both temporally and spiritually from the presence of the Lord; and thus we see they became subjects to follow after their own will.”⁷¹

Both literally and figuratively speaking, Smith’s narrative presents a dramatic departure from the traditional Adamic myth whose “intention is to set up a *radical* origin of evil distinct from the more *primordial* origin of goodness of things.”⁷² Mormonism’s evil is as uncreated and preexistent as is good. Both are always potential to the act, as choice, of the uncreated person. As the attendees to the counsel and, later, earth’s inhabitants, humans must choose between the two plans and their personal fate is decided by their choice. Implicit in this personal struggle is the notion that the power is in these persons not only to discern but also to vanquish evil. This, too, is a central dynamic in Smith’s challenge to traditional Christianity’s theological anthropology. In Smith’s completely original Genesis 1, Moses’s experience of the divine at the burning bush is followed by an assertion of his newly realized identity against Satan, who comes demanding to be worshipped: “Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the simil-

⁶⁷ JST Gen. 7:40.

⁶⁸ JST Gen. 5:44–45.

⁶⁹ JST Gen. 4:13.

⁷⁰ Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, 156.

⁷¹ Book of Mormon, Alma 42:7.

⁷² Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, 233.

itude of his Only Begotten; and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee?" Moses then summarily dismisses him with the command "Get thee hence, Satan; deceive me not." Subject to Moses's superior power, Satan must comply.⁷³ Thus, the agency and power of persons to effect their will, first manifested in the narrative of a heavenly council, characterizes earthly life as well.

The significance of human relatedness to God as *imago dei* and the extent of human access to divine power is made explicit in Moses's second theophany. After being taught of "worlds without number" and shown the earth and all its inhabitants, Moses asks "why these things are so." God answers: "this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."⁷⁴ With this reply, Smith rejected 1,500 years of Christian theological anthropology by making God ontologically related to creation. God is both defined as Father and glorified as God by the capacity and purpose to engender the divine life in humans. To Smith, "Father God" is not only a metaphor for expressing divine love, but is definitive of God and indicative of human possibility, even human capacity to receive the divine nature.

Thus, while JST Genesis appears to share with non-Christian creation dramas "a mode of thought according to which order comes at the end and not at the beginning," Smith's order is not "the last act of a drama that concerns the generation of the gods."⁷⁵ Rather, human existence is part of a plan that does not have a beginning or an end. Existence is an ongoing process by which God engenders in human beings the quality of life that characterizes their divine Father. The ultimate purpose of this redemptive plan is to enable humans to engender life and, thereby, experience divine joy. Hence, Smith's version of Eve, exiled from Eden and taught by angels the message of redemption, rejoiced to Adam: "were it not for our transgression, we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient."⁷⁶ "Eternal life" is comprised of being partakers of the divine nature or in possessing the capacity to engender in others the life one has received via the plan. The Book of Mormon states the full extent of LDS optimism: "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy."⁷⁷

⁷³ Moses 1:15–16, 22. The Herald House publication of the Joseph Smith Translation omits JST Gen. 1. It is included in the Latter-day Saint canon as "Moses 1" in the Book of Moses in The Pearl of Great Price. The Book of Moses contains JST Gen. 1–6.

⁷⁴ Moses 1:30, 39.

⁷⁵ Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, 233, 177.

⁷⁶ JST Gen. 4:11.

⁷⁷ Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 2:25.

Nevertheless, "men" are in a serious predicament. While the JST does not permit the conclusion that, as a consequence of Adam's sin, the human race is *massa peccati*, it does impute to Adam and Eve the cause of all humanity's subjugation to death—cast out of God's presence and destined for physical dissolution. The JST's largest single addition to the KJV is an account of a people and, more particularly, their prophet Enoch, who overcame both alienation and dissolution and obtained for his posterity the promise of the same. In Smith's elaboration on the figure of Enoch, Smith orients his Adamic myth toward a future that informs his believing readers' sense of present meanings and possibilities. Enoch and his ideal city provide the type of Zion to which saints of the latter days are to aspire. For the instant analysis, it is equally important, however, that the promise of Zion is obtained by human petition, not divine fiat. This is the final example of Smith's baptism of traditional Christianity into his restorationist project. It is possibly an even greater affront to tradition: giving humans a role in the preservation of the divine plan and, in so doing, constituting a means of their progressing toward the divine life itself.

III. URZEIT GLICHT ENDZEIT

Stories begin with a view to their end; just as types must take their bearings from antitypes. Both of these truisms meet in the Adamic myth's orientation to a future that overcomes the breach occasioned by the fall and, for Christian readers, through one who will mediate a new covenant of salvation. Thus, unlike the Babylonian cosmogonic myth that was directed toward "cultural-ritual re-enactment" of a past event and the Greek tragic myth that explained the present "spectacle of Terror and Pity," the Adamic myth was most essentially eschatological: it was oriented to the "man to come."⁷⁸ This was for Christianity the "second-man," the offer of "so much more" in Jesus Christ. Intermediate types were offered by the biblical narrative, however: figures that represented the promise of overcoming the fall and of ideal fulfillment of human potential as *imago dei*. In the traditional narrative, Abraham is the first and most fully drawn of such figures.⁷⁹ In the character of Enoch, Smith found an earlier figure to suggest another measure of human potential: theurgy, or the right to access heavenly powers and even to influence future events related to salvation.

After the JST describes the evolution of a godly order and rebellious

⁷⁸ Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, 260.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 262.

antiorder among Adam and Eve's immediate progeny, the generations of the patriarchs are listed consistent with the KJV. While the KJV was able to tell Enoch's story in thirteen words—"And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him"—the *JST* required 4,600.⁸⁰ Smith's Enoch is the most representative of Mormonism's understanding of the divine-human relationship and its rejection of contemporary Christian anthropology. For the sake of brevity, two themes must suffice to make this point. First, in the *JST*, Enoch "built a city that was called the city of Holiness, even Zion."⁸¹ The people were also called Zion "because they were of one heart and of one mind and dwelt in righteousness and there were no poor among them." In short, the story of Enoch tells of a community that experienced the end of evil. This is made clear in their overcoming the separation from God occasioned by the fall: "Enoch and all his people walked with God, and he dwelt in the midst of Zion." They triumphed over their enemies because Enoch "spake in the word of the Lord," and, when he did, humans and nature "were turned out of their course." Ultimately, not only Enoch, as implied in the KJV, but also his city were taken up to heaven without experiencing death.⁸² Second, and most significant for the argument of this article, Smith's narrative depicts an extended theophany in which Enoch is portrayed as obtaining guarantees of redemption from God in virtue of Enoch's God-given right to access heavenly power and exercise it in temporal affairs. This is the final example of the way in which Smith's mythos "recalibrates" categories of thought and privilege inherent in the status quo of Christian theologizing on the divine human relationship.⁸³

The *JST* account of Enoch's theophany begins with God showing Enoch what will happen to the wicked among his grandson's (Noah's) generation. Their fate in this world and the afterlife not only causes the heavens to "weep, and shed forth their tears as the rain upon the mountains" but also moves God to weep. This mystifies Enoch, who asks, "How is it thou canst weep, seeing thou are holy, and from all eternity to all eternity?" The reply emphasizes God's relationship to the earth's inhabitants. Notwithstanding his "commandment, that they should love one another; and that they should choose me their Father . . . they are," God explains, "without affection, and they hate their

⁸⁰ KJV Gen. 5:24.

⁸¹ All quotations from the *JST* related to the Enoch narrative are from *JST* Gen. 7 and in the interest of space will not be individually referenced when quoted below, except where further elaboration is needed.

⁸² *JST* Gen. 7:27 ("Zion, in process of time, was taken up into heaven. And the Lord said unto Enoch: Behold mine abode forever").

⁸³ Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth*, 216 n. 14.

own blood." After watching the devastation of the flood, Enoch's attitude changes. In contrast to his initial shock that the Lord would mourn such as these, he now "wept over his brethren, and said unto the heavens, I will refuse to be comforted." Enoch petitions God to promise that he will never again destroy the earth by flood. The JST provides: "the Lord could not withhold; and he covenanted with Enoch, and sware unto him an oath." The promise is the familiar one, though it contains an additional element. God not only swears that "he would stay the floods," but also that "he would call upon the children of Noah." This additional promise echoes Smith's characterization of Adam and Eve after their fall: separated from God but not out of the range of his voice. According to the JST, "the gospel was preached [unto Adam and Eve after their expulsion]; and a decree sent forth that it should be in the world until the end thereof; and thus it was."⁸⁴ In the JST, human cooperation is a necessary element in the performance of this decree. In Smith's cosmology, human communication with the divine is not only a necessary constant, but its message is that humans must assume responsibility for the execution of God's plan for human salvation. This is more plainly evidenced by Enoch's next request.

After witnessing in vision Noah's survival of the flood and the promised continuation of his progeny, Enoch is next shown the death of the Messiah. Even more appalled by this turn of events, Enoch again "wept and cried unto the Lord," obtaining a second promise. His preface to the request is, however, an unusual one: "for inasmuch as thou art God, and I know thee, and thou has sworn unto me, and commanded me that I should ask in the name of thine Only Begotten; thou has made me, and given unto me a right to thy throne, and not of myself, but through thine own grace; wherefore I ask thee if thou wilt not come again on the earth?" This is probably the most dramatic example of the theurgic force of Smith's revisions to Genesis and reveals another dimension of Smith's rejection of the classic theological anthropology of Christianity. In the JST account, Enoch realized for himself and his people the hope of overcoming on earth the breach in the bond with the sacred through the establishment of Zion. In addition, by rights given to him by God, Enoch obtained from God the promise that he would continue to manifest himself to Enoch's posterity and, through them, minister salvation to the world.⁸⁵ Though

⁸⁴ JST Gen. 5:45

⁸⁵ This is the clearest signal that, for Smith, Enoch represents an antecedent to the Abrahamic covenant that "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed

Enoch is portrayed as having obtained this promise “not of myself, but through . . . grace,” it is no less the case that Smith’s narrative contemplates that humans may influence the divine will. This is demonstrated in God’s response to Enoch’s assertion of right in conjunction with his petition that God not abandon Enoch’s progeny, notwithstanding the death of the Messiah. God swears, “Even as I live, even so will I come in the last days . . . to fulfil the oath which I have made unto you.”

Thus, in the figure of Enoch, Smith found a figure of covenantal hope earlier than Abraham, linked that hope directly to the coming of a messiah, and directed its fulfillment to an end times conditioned on human agency to call down the powers of heaven. The JST’s repetition of the covenant to Noah makes this more explicit. The KJV provides that the bow is a reminder of God’s everlasting covenant with “every living creature” to never again destroy the earth by flood. In contrast, the JST Noah is told the bow is a sign of the covenant with Enoch “that, when men should keep all my commandments, Zion should again come on the earth.”⁸⁶ Moreover, as with Enoch himself, those who would realize the promise of the covenant must contribute to its realization by obtaining heavenly powers on a temporal plane. They must “embrace the truth and look upward.” When they do “then shall Zion look downward . . . [and] shall come down out of heaven and possess the earth, and shall have place till the end come.” These are the terms of “the everlasting covenant” that effects the reconstitution of the bond with the sacred and holds the key to the end of evil. Though this promise of a latter-day Zion that would receive Enoch’s Zion, as well as partake of its theurgic powers, obtains from the past, as narrativized by Smith, it constitutes a sacred history that oriented the Latter-day Saints to a particular future. It provided an identity that carried them from New York to the Ohio frontier, through extermination orders in Missouri to exile from Illinois, and finally to the Rocky Mountains, building city after city in hope of Zion.⁸⁷

Though occupied with an ancient figure, the Enoch narrative directs

after thee” (see Genesis 17 and 22:15–18). For extension of the Abrahamic covenant to the Christian movement, see, e.g., Luke 16:22–23 (the righteous to rest in the bosom of Abraham) and Gal. 3:8 and 29 (through Christ, the Gentiles become the seed of Abraham and “heirs according to the promise”). For Smith’s elaboration on this covenant, see the Book of Abraham 2.

⁸⁶ JST Gen. 9:21–23; cf. KJV Gen. 9:16.

⁸⁷ Shipps (*Mormonism*, 47, 53, and 57) was the first to recognize this “pattern of reappropriation” of the Bible story that fueled the LDS reenactment on the American frontier of ancient Israel’s saga of gathering, exodus, and kingdom building. Relying largely on pioneer sources, she concluded that LDS reappropriation was, however, “an exterior story rather than an interior one.”

faithful readers of the JST to a future project: the return of Zion in fulfillment of God's promise to Enoch and, through Enoch, to all the posterity of Noah. In the "last days," there would be "great tribulations . . . but my people will I preserve," God promised. Specifically, "righteousness will I send down out of heaven, and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten."⁸⁸ To Latter-day Saints, this is nothing less than the heavenly messengers sent to Smith and the unearthing the Book of Mormon's "golden plates," which constituted a second witness of Christ by restoring "many plain and precious things" lost from the Bible.⁸⁹ Smith's narratives weave Mormonism into biblical history, but not as an aspiration to "live ancient lives" so definitive of the Latter-day Saints' Puritan progenitors. Smith's followers did not believe their "commonwealth should subside into the routine of the communal covenant: a rhythm of declension and return with a basically static religious and social framework" modeled on a biblical past.⁹⁰ Rather, the Latter-day Saints aspired to become Enochs in their own right: walking and talking with God and exercising their own powers within a new Zion wherein God would make his millennial abode. In 1836, the Latter-day Saints' dedicated their first temple with a song that included the lyric:

The latter day glory begins to come forth;
The visions and blessings of old are returning;
The angels are coming to visit the earth. . . .
The knowledge and power of God are expanding.
The vail o'er the earth is beginning to burst.⁹¹

The Latter-day Saints understood themselves both as beneficiaries of God's grace and as God's agents for overcoming of the effects of the fall. The full eschatology of Smith's Adamic myth is found in the promise made to Enoch, like the promise made to Abraham "that his people would have a salvific relation with God is an inexhaustible promise . . . as such it opens up a history in which this promise can be repeated and reinterpreted over and over again."⁹²

The building of Zion remains the "future project" of the LDS Church and is "intimately related to the ways in which it remembers

⁸⁸ JST Gen. 7:67, 69.

⁸⁹ Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 13:28–29, 35, and 40.

⁹⁰ Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 345, 349.

⁹¹ "The Spirit of God like a Fire Is Burning," in *Collection of Sacred Hymns, for the Church of the Latter Day Saints* (Kirtland, OH: F. G. Williams, 1835; repr., Independence, MO: Herald Heritage, 1973), hymn 90.

⁹² Paul Ricoeur, "Creativity in Language," in Valdés, *Ricoeur Reader*, 472.

itself.”⁹³ The promise of Zion still orders the experience of Smith’s faithful readers, providing them a beginning and an end between which they, as his readers—by means of their own heuristic powers of imagination—get their bearings to act. Their local ecclesiastical units are called “stakes,” symbolic of the stakes that anchor the tent of Zion, and are collectively referred to as “the stakes of Zion.” Thus, as with other myths that have founded a sense of peoplehood, Smith’s narrative history of human and divine interaction was ultimately oriented to a future time that served as a basis for acting in the present. It provided a world of meaning by which his believing readers understood themselves existentially, including their future and not merely their past. Most fundamentally, Smith’s writings give his believing readers a different sense of what was and what will be and, as a consequence, give significance to and a sense of what is real in the present. Just as the story of a realized messiah and the coming kingdom profoundly reoriented the Jews called “Christian,” Smith’s writings of the “fulness of times” provided a unique means by which the Latter-day Saints’ alterity has been maintained, even as they integrated with contemporary society.

IV. CONCLUSION

With respect to academic arguments over the New Testament’s historicity, philosopher Mary Warnock has argued that the debates “show a failure to understand the full part that imagination plays not only in religion but in literature, history and in life itself, lived as it is through time, yet demanding a constant effort to make sense of time, to turn events into stories.”⁹⁴ Analogously, it can be said that the nature and function of Smith’s texts can best be understood not in terms of historical veracity but as a means to “make sense of time,” specifically biblical time. Or, in terms of narrative theory, Smith’s mythmaking may be best understood in terms of its capacity to make “human time,” that combination of what is already (our past) with what is anticipated (our future) to comprise the reality out of which we act in the present.⁹⁵ Thus, by maintaining the narrative function of the Bible in his own writings, Smith made more than a claim to history. He gave his believing readers a sense of what was experientially real, not merely philosophically true. Wittgenstein’s observation about Christianity is equally

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Mary Warnock, “Religious Imagination,” in *Religious Imagination*, ed. James P. Mackey (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1986), 155–56.

⁹⁵ Ricoeur, “Narrated Time,” 354.

true of Mormonism. "Christianity is not," he said, "based on a historical truth; rather it offers us a (historical) narrative and says: now believe! But not, believe this narrative with the belief appropriate to historical narrative, rather . . . make a quite different place in your life for it."⁹⁶ Attention to narrative function furthers Wittgenstein's point by positing that the believing reader's commitment is not partial. The reader does not make "a place" for the narrative but enters—takes his or her life experience—into the narrative as a world of possibility.

This is not to argue against the kind of verification fundamental to scientific history, though it does side with Warnock's observation that a positivist approach can miss the role of human imagination in not merely perceiving but also constructing reality. Rather, it is to argue for something besides the power of description at work in certain narratives, especially those that rise to the level of mythos and make a claim to religious authority. Smith's narratives do not display fact to be assented to but draw the reader into a malleable reality by means of the malleable plots that traditionally provided the basis for Jewish and Christian ethos and ethic. It can be said that Smith was translating time, not text. Specifically, he translated biblical time in service to, he said, an "ushering in of the dispensation of the fullness of times . . . a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers . . . from the days of Adam even to the present time."⁹⁷ Whatever his intention, the effect was to deploy the biblical text in a manner that radically subverted centuries of theologizing on who God is and how humans are to worship God.

Making room for a more poetic function at work between this reading-and-writing prophet and his confirming God allows that "truth," as Ricoeur has said, "no longer means verification, but manifestation. . . . What shows itself is in each instance a proposed world, a world I may inhabit and wherein I can project my own most possibilities."⁹⁸ This is the power to which Bloom credited Mormonism's survival: not Smith's history making but his "myth-making imagination at work to sustain so astonishing an innovation."⁹⁹ It is the power to shape reality, not merely describe it. To the extent that self-consciousness can be ascribed to him, it is probably why Smith abjured theology for mythmaking. Re-

⁹⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, ed. G. H. von Wright with Heikki Nyman, trans. Peter Winch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 32e; quoted in Van A. Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), xxvii.

⁹⁷ Doctrine and Covenants 128:18.

⁹⁸ Ricoeur, "Toward a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation," 102.

⁹⁹ Bloom, *American Religion*, 97.

ardless, scholars who would understand the relative longevity and appeal of his project, especially as it has transcended its American milieu, can ill afford to ignore the capacity of Smith's narratives to make sense of time.

Two Apologetic Moments in Śāṅkara's Concept of Brahman*

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Constructive theological works invariably contain refutations of opposing views. The positive formulation of religious belief is typically bound up with some form of polemics. And yet, what might appear obvious to the outside observer is rarely acknowledged by the religious insider, namely, that the content of religious belief is substantively influenced by the refutation of rival teachings. In traditional theological self-understanding, apologetics is only a secondary theological enterprise; at most, rival teachings influence the formulation, but never the substantive content, of a self-contained system of religious belief. Some contemporary theologians, however, have abandoned the dubious presumption that their tradition's core beliefs are self-generated, that they occupy a kind of magic circle insulated from outside influence. Appealing to Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of "double-voiced" discourse, Christian theologian Kathryn Tanner writes: "A kind of apologetics or polemics with other cultures is internal, then, to the very construction of Christian sense. . . . Theological statements themselves amount to a transformative and reevaluative commentary on the wider culture insofar as they are double-voiced: theological statements mouth the claims of other cultures while giving them a new spin."¹

Tanner's statement is a response to a problematic that is specific to Christian theology in the modern West, namely, the relation of theological claims to secular knowledge, or, to use a more theological idiom, the relation between "Christ and culture."² The understanding of theological statements as double voiced transcends this particular problem-

* Many thanks to Andrew Nicholson and Reid Locklin for their helpful critical comments on an earlier draft of this article.

¹ Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 116.

² See Kathryn Tanner, "The Difference Theological Anthropology Makes," *Theology Today* 50, no. 4 (January 1994): 568–69, on the commentarial nature of theology vis-à-vis the natural and human sciences.

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atic, however. As I hope to show in this article, the concept of double-voiced discourse can shed considerable light on at least one theological tradition outside of Christianity, namely, the tradition of non-Dualist or Advaita Vedānta.

Śaṅkara's *Brahma-sūtra-Bhāṣya* (early eighth century CE),³ the foundational text of the Advaita tradition, is an outstanding example of multivoiced theological discourse. Like most of Śaṅkara's other major works, the *Brahma-sūtra-Bhāṣya* belongs to the genre of commentary—actually, it is a metacommentary. The set of gnomic utterances known as the *Brahma-sūtra* (fifth century CE)⁴—the immediate object of Śaṅkara's commentary—itself constitutes a commentary on the disparate collection of texts composing the Upaniṣadic corpus (the earliest of which date from roughly the seventh to eighth centuries BCE).⁵ On each of these commentarial levels the intention of the commentary “spins” and refracts, but does not efface, that of the text upon which it comments.⁶ The perspective of the *Brahma-sūtra*, which, as we shall see, differs in certain respects from Śaṅkara's own, is still visible just beneath the refracting surface of the latter's commentary.⁷ But the multivocality of the *Brahma-sūtra-Bhāṣya* is actually far richer and more complex than this tripartite schema of text, commentary, and metacommentary suggests. Both the commentary, the *Brahma-sūtra*, and the metacommentary, Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya*, incorporate discourses in addition to the respective texts upon which they explicitly comment.⁸ Included among the “voices” appropriated and spun are those of rival schools.

³ See Hajime Nakamura, *A History of Early Vedānta Philosophy*, trans. Trevor Leggett et al. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), pt. 1:65–89, for determination of Śaṅkara's dates. Nakamura places the period of Śaṅkara's creative activity in the first half of the eighth century.

⁴ Nakamura dates the final redaction of the *Brahma-sūtra* between 400 and 450 CE. The composition of the sutras would have taken place much earlier. See *ibid.*, 436.

⁵ See Patrick Olivelle, trans., *Upaniṣads* (Oxford, 1996), xxxvi–xxxvii. The dates given for the Upaniṣads are extremely rough; as Olivelle observes, “Any dating of these documents that attempts a precision closer than a few centuries is as stable as a house of cards” (xxxvi).

⁶ See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis, 1984), 189: “But the author may also make use of someone else's discourse for his own purposes, by inserting a new semantic intention into a discourse which already has, and which retains, an intention of its own.”

⁷ My use of the metaphor of visibility and surface comes from Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, 116.

⁸ The *Brahma-sūtra*, for example, cites the teachings of Bādarāyaṇa as the authority for its own (Nakamura, *History*, 406). Occasional divergences between the views of Bādarāyaṇa and the author of the *Brahma-sūtra* (*ibid.*, 519, 423)—most notably, on the relation between rites and knowledge—reveal (at least) two distinct intentions, two voices, internal to the *Brahma-sūtra*. In a similar way, Śaṅkara's commentary most likely preserves the “voice” of an earlier, although unfortunately no longer extant, commentary. As we shall see below, Śaṅkara followed an earlier commentarial tradition on the *Brahma-sūtra*, notwithstanding the fact that this earlier commentary represented a distinct interpretive position.

Indeed, this apologetic dimension of the *Bhāṣya* is as pronounced as the commentarial. Even a cursory glance at the text shows that refutations of opposing views compose a large portion of the work.⁹

In this article I hope to show that an appreciation of the commentarial and apologetic dimensions of Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya* is essential to a proper understanding of the Advaita concept of brahman. Here I follow the lead of Francis Clooney, who warns against the temptation to reduce the teaching of Advaita to an easily accessible set of conclusions or propositions.¹⁰ A set of propositions cannot be abstracted from the exegetical practices and apologetic strategies from which they emerge without suffering a loss of meaning. Advaita doctrine is properly understood only when it is seen as the outcome of a careful negotiation of meaning with authoritative texts and competing interpretations of those texts. In keeping with Clooney's insistence on the "intratextual" nature of Advaita doctrine, I would like to suggest that we view the concept of brahman, particularly with reference to its transcendental character, as generated out of the tension among the multiple voices that constitute the Advaita "Text."¹¹ Here I find it helpful to relate the development of the Advaitic concept of brahman as recorded in the stratified text of the *Brahma-sūtra-Bhāṣya* to the metaphorical process by which the transcendent concept of God is constructed through the

⁹ Sometimes, although relatively rarely, the commentarial and the apologetic dimensions of a classical Indian text coincided. It was not unheard of in classical India for an author to make use of a text from a rival community for the dissemination of his own views. It appears that sometimes the decision to comment on a given text was determined less by the level of agreement between its teachings and the commentator's own than by the recognition that that text had attained in the wider brahmanical community. See Klaus Rüping, *Philologische Untersuchungen zu den Brahmasūtra-Kommentaren des Śaṅkara und des Bhāskara* [Philological investigations on the *Brahma-sūtra* commentaries of Śaṅkara and Bhāskara] (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977), 67: "Dort kommt es recht oft vor, dass ein Autor einen gegnerischen Text, etwa den einer rivalisierenden religiösen Gruppe, benutzt und ihn für seine eigenen Zwecke umarbeitet" (There it often happens that an author makes use of an opponent's text, perhaps that of a rival religious group, and modifies it in accordance with his own purposes).

¹⁰ Francis X. Clooney, *Theology after Vedānta* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993), 28–29 and passim, and "The Principle of Upasamhāra and the Development of Vedānta as an Uttara Mīmāṃsā," in *Studies in Mīmāṃsā*, ed. R. C. Dwivedi (Delhi: Motilal, 1994), 279–80 and passim. Clooney's preference for a textual/exegetical, rather than strictly philosophical, approach to the study of Vedānta is informed by his extensive study of Mīmāṃsā.

¹¹ While respecting the tradition's insistence that brahman is more than the object of what Foucault would call a "discursive formation," Clooney argues that the knowledge of brahman is thoroughly "inscribed" in the Advaita "Text"; that is to say, such knowledge becomes available only in and through a sustained engagement with the foundational texts of the Advaita tradition. See Clooney, *Theology after Vedānta*, 33: "Though Brahman is neither a fiction (as might be a character in a novel) nor a textual production (as might be a ritual vis-à-vis the texts which accompany it), Advaita's truth about Brahman does not exist outside of texts, but only after them." See also "Principle of Upasamhāra," 284, 294 n. 12, where Clooney draws an intriguing parallel between the Vedānta concept of brahman and the Mīmāṃsā principle of *artha*.

"qualification" (Ian Ramsey) of a basic conceptual model.¹² The concept of brahman is gradually built up from the successive qualifications the founding teachers of Vedānta impart to the conceptual models they inherit from the brahmanical tradition. These qualifications, moreover, typically are apologetically motivated. The reception of traditional teachings occurs in a polemical context in which the meaning of those teachings is inflected by contemporary apologetic concerns. In the pages that follow, I shall identify two such apologetic "moments" in the development of the concept of brahman as it is found in the text of Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya*.

In the first moment, the early Vedāntic tradition qualifies the Upaniṣadic understanding of the highest principle as the material cause of the world. The foundational text for this basic understanding is the celebrated sixth chapter of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. There the sage Uddalāka Āruṇi likens the supreme gnoseological principle to the clay from which all clay artifacts can be known. Appealing to other Upaniṣadic texts that speak of brahman as the intelligent agent of creation, Vedānta "qualifies" this basic model by insisting that the supreme principle, brahman, is at the same time the world's intelligent efficient cause (*nimitta-kāraṇa*). Apologetic considerations played a central role in calling attention to the "agency" texts qualifying the model of brahman as *causa materialis*. To be specific, a crucial factor in this emphasis on the conscious and intelligent nature of brahman was a concern with refuting the influential interpretation of the Sāṃkhya school, which postulated insentient matter, or *pradhāna*, as the world cause. This understanding of brahman as the world's material and efficient cause was most probably the achievement of the pre-Śaṅkara tradition of realist Vedānta.

In a second apologetic moment, Śaṅkara's Advaita school, perhaps borrowing from some version of the Buddhist Two Truths doctrine, introduced a hitherto unknown distinction between the conditioned and unconditioned forms of brahman.¹³ This distinction further qual-

¹² For the theory of models and qualifiers, see Ian T. Ramsey, *Religious Language* (London: Macmillan, 1957), esp. chap. 2. Theological qualification need not imply an attenuation of cognitive meaning as assumed by the positivist critics of theological language in the original "theology and falsification" debate. Rather, if the theory of models and qualifiers is understood in terms of a tension or interaction theory of metaphor, then the theological qualification described by Ramsey can be seen as a mechanism for the creation of meaning. For a critical, although appreciative, use of Ramsey's theory, see Paul Ricoeur, *Paul Ricoeur on Biblical Hermeneutics*, Semeia 4 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), 119–24; see also David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order* (Chicago, 1996), 121–23.

¹³ See Nakamura, *History*, 488: "Śaṅkara regarded Brahman with such active character as the Lord (*īśvara*), and distinguished it from Brahman in itself, but the *Brahma-sūtra* itself did not distinguish between the two."

ified the basic conception of brahman as the world's material cause. While the first qualification had the effect of removing brahman from the range of empirical cognition (it being impossible for the human mind to wrap itself around the idea of material and efficient causation inhering in a single principle), the second qualified the cosmological conception of brahman to the point of rendering metaphorical the idea of brahman/God as creator. For the concept of qualityless (*nir-guṇa*) brahman implies a denial of the independent existence of the very world that the personal, creator brahman—now relegated to a lower, conditioned manifestation of the former—was supposed to bring into being. As was the case with the first, this qualification was motivated by apologetic considerations. The concept of unconditioned, *nir-guṇa* brahman was part of a discourse intended to undermine the legitimacy of ritual and meditative activity as salvific means. It reflects a polemic between Śaṅkara, representing the ideal of “pure” renunciation, and other Vedāntists who believed that a combination of renunciation and ritual activity was the most effective means of salvation.

Given the paucity of sources, both textual and extratextual, for the history of early Vedānta, to say nothing of that of early Sāṃkhya, the proposed reading of the *Brahma-sūtra-Bhāṣya* in terms of two defining apologetic moments can claim to be little more than a hypothesis. Nevertheless, it does carry some important interpretive benefits. As I hope to show in the second part of this essay, it sheds fresh critical light on the long-standing and controversial question of whether Śaṅkara taught that the phenomenal world is unreal. Moreover, this reading of the *Bhāṣya* as double voiced, in emphasizing the creative tension between the personal and impersonal aspects of brahman, suggests a more dynamic conception of brahman than the abstract and static Absolute typically associated with the Śaṅkara tradition.

THE REJECTION OF SĀMĀKHYA AND THE DOCTRINE OF BRAHMAN AS INTELLIGENT MATERIAL CAUSE

In this first section I shall argue that a refutation of Sāṃkhya played a central role in the early conceptualization of brahman in the *Brahma-sūtra*. The two defining features of that conception were, first, that brahman was the chief purport of the Upaniṣads and, second, that it was a reality irreducible to the objects of ordinary cognition (*pramāṇaviṣayaḥ*). These two propositions establish the defining principle of Vedānta, namely, the independent validity of the Upaniṣadic texts. To the extent that their object was a transcendent reality, the Upaniṣads

were subservient neither to the injunctive portion of the Veda nor to the worldly means of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*).

Even a casual perusal of Śaṅkara's *Brahma-sūtra-Bhāṣya* reveals that a remarkably large portion of this text is devoted to a refutation of Sāṃkhya teaching.¹⁴ Śaṅkara apparently feels the need to justify the disproportionate attention given to Sāṃkhya when he suggests that a refutation of other rival doctrines is included in the refutation of the Sāṃkhya doctrine of insentient *pradhāna* as the world's cause.¹⁵ The hint of an apologetic attitude here indicates that Śaṅkara, in refuting Sāṃkhya theories so extensively, is simply following the lead of the *Brahma-sūtra*, as he himself, in fact, acknowledges.¹⁶ Indeed, the refutation of Sāṃkhya may not have been a vital and pressing concern for Śaṅkara himself, and the *Bhāṣya*'s extensive treatment of Sāṃkhya doctrines may have been little more than a holdover from the concerns of the author(s) of the *Brahma-sūtra*. Whatever may have been the extent of Śaṅkara's direct concern with Sāṃkhya, it is clear that the critique of Sāṃkhya belongs to the earliest, formative stages of the Vedānta tradition. As Nakamura observes, "A great portion of the *Brahma-sūtra* is devoted to the criticism of Sāṃkhya, and it is possible to say that it was through this criticism that the Vedāntic school established itself as an independent philosophical tradition."¹⁷

As mentioned above, the Sāṃkhya doctrine that preoccupied the author(s) of the *Brahma-sūtra* was the doctrine of insentient *pradhāna* as the world cause. The *pradhāna* doctrine presented an immediate challenge to the *Brahma-sūtra*'s project of establishing brahman as the universal purport of the Upaniṣads. That all the Upaniṣads speak of Brah-

¹⁴ See Gerald James Larson, *Classical Sāṃkhya* (Santa Barbara, CA: Ross/Erikson, 1979), 209: "Śaṅkara in his *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya* gives more detailed and precise attention to the criticism of Sāṃkhya than he does to any other system."

¹⁵ Ibid., 210; see J. L. Shastri, ed., *BrahmaSūtra-Śaṅkarabhāṣyam* (Delhi: Motilal, 1980; hereafter *BSūBh*), 343, lines 6–8 (I.4.28): "ataḥ pradhānamallanirbahaṇanyāyenātīdīśati—etena pradhānakāraṇavādapratīṣedhanyāyakalāpena sarve 'nvādikāraṇavādā api pratiṣiddhatayā vyākhyātā veditavyāḥ. teṣām api pradhānavad aśabdatvācchabdavirodhitvāceti" (Hence he extends [his critique to other views] with the argument used to defeat the *pradhāna* doctrine, the [strongest] wrestler, as it were. By this lead argument against the doctrine of *pradhāna* as the world cause, all other doctrines, such as the [Vaiśeṣika] atomic theory of causation, are also to be understood as refuted). Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own. I have erred on the side of readability over literal accuracy.

¹⁶ But see Larson, *Classical Sāṃkhya*, 211, for a reference to other scholars, George Thibaut in particular, who call into question Śaṅkara's claim that his refutation of Sāṃkhya simply follows that of Bādarāyaṇa.

¹⁷ Nakamura, *History*, 472, 301, 432; Mysore Hiriyanna makes the same point in "Bhartṛprapañca: An Old Vedāntin," in his *Indian Philosophical Studies* (Mysore: Kavyalaya, 1957), 94: "It would perhaps be not far from correct to say that one of the foremost aims—albeit a negative one—of Bādarāyaṇa in composing the *Vedānta-sūtras* was to refute the view that the realistic and dualistic *Sāṃkhya* was the teaching of the Upaniṣads."

man as the fundamental cosmic principle is by no means obvious. The *Brahma-sūtra* selected brahman from a series of possible candidates mentioned in various places within the Upaniṣadic corpus—*prāṇa*, *puṛuṣa*, *akṣara*, and so on.¹⁸ If brahman's claim to be the absolute cosmic principle seems obvious to us today, this is due to the now virtually unrivalled influence of the Vedāntic interpretation. During the time of the composition and redaction of the *Brahma-sūtra*, however—that is, during Vedānta's formative period—it was the Sāṃkhya school that most likely held a privileged and influential position within the brahmanical tradition.¹⁹ Thus, the author of the *Brahma-sūtra*, almost immediately after proposing brahman as the universal import of the Upaniṣads and as the world cause, is obliged in I.1.5ff. to repudiate *pradhāna*'s claim to that title. That the *Brahma-sūtra*'s concept of brahman was developed in the context of a rejection of the *pradhāna* concept suggests a more intimate connection between polemics and doctrine in the formative stages of Vedānta than is usually acknowledged. To be specific, Vedānta's insistence on the conscious nature of brahman appears to have been inextricably bound up with the explicit rejection of insentient *pradhāna* as the world cause. And it is this insistence that forms the basis of the great teaching of the Vedānta, namely, the identification (however conceived by the various traditions of Vedānta) of brahman, as cosmic principle, and *ātman*, as the principle of consciousness.²⁰

While the paucity of information about early Sāṃkhya and Vedānta rules out any firm conclusions regarding their historical relationship, the two schools most likely emerged out of a common tradition of brahmanical religious thought. An indication of this common origin is the fact that, as Edgerton demonstrated long ago in a still-valuable article, the two main distinguishing doctrines of Sāṃkhya, namely, the denial of God and the plurality of souls, only appear in that tradition quite late.²¹ The earliest sources for Sāṃkhya philosophy in the (late) Upani-

¹⁸ Nakamura, *History*, 105, gives a useful list of the various principles that Vedānta will correlate to brahman; see also 429, on the *Brahma-sūtra*'s selection of brahman as the absolute principle from a number of possible alternative candidates.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 472; see also Larson, *Classical Sāṃkhya*, 213.

²⁰ The *ātman*-brahman equation is best regarded as the achievement of Vedāntic interpretation rather than as a straightforward translation of the Upaniṣadic formula, *tat tvam asi*. This is the conclusion one draws from Joel Brereton's seminal article, "Tat Tvam Asi in Context," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 136, no. 1 (1986): 98–109.

²¹ Franklin Edgerton, "The Meaning of Sāṃkhya and Yoga," *American Journal of Philology* 45, no. 1 (1924): 7–14 (against the assumption that early Sāṃkhya was atheistic), 22–29 (on the relative lateness of the doctrine of the plurality of souls). In his critical summary of past scholarship on Sāṃkhya, Gerald Larson has mostly good things to say about Edgerton. His criticism is that the latter, in advancing the thesis that Sāṃkhya was defined by its method

śadic and epic literature, most notably in the Mokṣadharma Parvan of the *Mahābhārata*, contain little, if anything, to rule out a Vedāntic interpretation. Thanks to this common heritage in what Edgerton calls "epic brahmanism," Sāṃkhya and Vedānta share, despite their mutual antagonism, a number of fundamental presuppositions.²² Both presuppose the concepts of karma and samsara, as well as the understanding of salvation as liberation (*mokṣa*) from samsaric existence. Both schools advocate a kind of knowledge, as opposed to ritual or cultic activity, as the means of liberation.²³ Moreover, both understood the nature of this knowledge to consist in a discrimination (*viveka*) between the soul (*ātman* for the one; *puruṣa* for the other) and body.²⁴ Both affirmed, against schools like the Vaiśeṣika, the principle of *satkāryatva*, that is, the preexistence of the effect in its cause. Most important, both schools recognized the authority of the Upaniṣads.²⁵ We can readily understand the early Vedāntists' antagonism toward the Sāṃkhya doctrines in terms of the sociological principle that proximity constitutes a threat to the distinctive identity of a school or tradition.²⁶ It is noteworthy that later, when the respective identities of the two schools were safely established, Indian thinkers like Vijñānabhikṣu were able to reconcile and synthesize the teachings of these two schools with relative ease.²⁷

Although these two schools did not originally differ greatly with respect to doctrinal content, sharing as they did a common body of brahmanical religious teaching, they did differ in terms of their respective methods. This difference in method is clearly indicated by the respective senses of the terms *sāṃkhya* and *vedānta* before these terms came to designate philosophical schools. In its early usage in the epic liter-

and not by any specific content, tended to overstate his case; Larson faults him for overcompensating for the tendency in previous scholarship to read later doctrines into early texts. As far as I can tell, however, this criticism has mostly to do with emphasis, leaving Edgerton's basic theses intact. See Larson, *Classical Sāṃkhya*, 33–36, esp. 36.

²² Edgerton, "Meaning of Sāṃkhya and Yoga," 33ff. See Hirianna, "Bharṭṭi-prapañca," 92–94, on the resemblances between the early Vedānta of Bharṭṭi-prapañca and Sāṃkhya.

²³ Edgerton, "Meaning of Sāṃkhya and Yoga," 4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 12, 16.

²⁵ Nakamura, *History*, 432, 473.

²⁶ Śaṅkara himself acknowledges the threat posed by the similarity of the Sāṃkhya teaching to Vedānta, specifically, with respect to the principle of *satkāryavāda*. See Shastri, *BSūBh*, 343, line 3 (I.4.28): "sa ca kāryakāraṇānanyatvābhyupagamāt pratyāsanno vedāntavādasya" (The [Sāṃkhya position] is close to that of the Vedānta, on account of its acknowledgment of the principle of the nondifference between cause and effect).

²⁷ See Nakamura, *History*, 334; see also Andrew J. Nicholson, "Doxography, Classificatory Schemes, and Contested Histories," which forms chap. 4 of his (as of yet) unpublished dissertation, "Doctrine and Boundary Formation: The Philosophy of Vijñānabhikṣu in Indian Intellectual History" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations, 2005), 4.

ature, *sāṃkhya* probably did not refer to a particular philosophical system but referred more generically to the intellectual method of salvation.²⁸ Edgerton interprets this original sense of *sāṃkhya* as “(the method of salvation) based on reckoning or calculation.”²⁹ In a similar way, the term *vedānta*, before it came to designate a particular set of doctrines, referred to the interpretive-exegetical study of the Upaniṣadic corpus.³⁰ This early sense of *vedānta* still remains close to its literal reference to a body of texts situated “at the end of the Veda.” Thus, from its earliest beginnings, the Vedāntic school was defined by its fidelity to the Upaniṣadic texts.³¹ Significantly, early texts such as Kauṭīliya’s *Arthaśāstra* appear not to have recognized Vedānta and its closely allied sister school, the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā, as schools of philosophy (*ānvīkṣikī*), viewing them instead—and not unjustly—as schools of Vedic exegesis.³² While acknowledging the risks involved in using Western categories in the interpretation of Indian culture, we might capture the difference between Sāṃkhya and Vedānta by characterizing the former as primarily a system of philosophy and the latter as one of theology.³³ Of course this difference in the respective attitudes of these two schools toward “faith” and “reason” was a matter of emphasis. Vedānta, for its part, recognized the validity, albeit restricted and subordinate, of the use of reason (*yukti*) in deciding matters of interpretation and doctrine.³⁴ For its part, Sāṃkhya also acknowledged the authority of the Upaniṣads, although it had a more realistic appreciation than did Vedānta of the ambiguities and inconsistencies of this disparate

²⁸ Edgerton, *Meaning of Sāṃkhya and Yoga*, 36.

²⁹ Ibid., 36–37. In support of this thesis Edgerton (36) cites and translates *Mahābhārata* 12.11934: “doṣāṇaṃ ca guṇāṇaṃ ca, pramāṇaṃ pravibhāgataḥ, kaṃcid artham abhipretya, sā sāṃkhyeti upadhāryatām” (The weighing of strong and weak points severally, as one presses forward to some conclusion, this should be understood as *sāṃkhya*, reasoning, calculation).

³⁰ Nakamura, *History*, 108–16.

³¹ Ibid., 116.

³² Ibid., 320–21; see also 331–32, on the similar perception of Vedānta in early Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika literature. Significantly, Vedānta and Mīmāṃsā were originally not seen as separate (331).

³³ Clooney, in particular, has argued for the characterization of Advaita as theology rather than philosophy; see *Theology after Vedānta*, 26ff. Of course, to describe Advaita as primarily theological is not to suggest that Advaita thinkers like Śaṅkara were not capable of rigorous philosophical argumentation. Moreover, this “philosophical” dimension comes to the fore when Advaitins turn to the refutation of rival views, where reasoning was granted a certain autonomy, as the works of Citsukha and Śrīharṣa (among others) attest.

³⁴ For two excellent studies of the relationship between reason and authority in Śaṅkara’s Vedānta, see Wilhelm Halbfass, “Human Reason and Vedic Revelation in Advaita Vedānta,” in his *Tradition and Reflection* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991), 131–204; and John Taber, “Reason, Revelation, and Idealism in Śaṅkara’s Vedānta,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 9 (1981): 283–307.

body of texts. Accordingly, it affirmed the preeminence of reason in deciding between conflicts of interpretation. Gerald Larson nicely summarizes this difference between Vedānta, represented by Śaṅkara, and Sāṃkhya when he writes: "For Śaṅkara philosophy is the handmaiden of 'theology.' For Sāṃkhya 'theology' is the handmaiden of philosophy."³⁵

In his commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* I.1.5, Śaṅkara indicates quite clearly that this methodological difference between Vedānta and Sāṃkhya is fundamental. Whatever doctrinal differences these two schools have derive from this fundamental difference in approach. The defining characteristic of the Sāṃkhya candidate for world cause, *pradhāna*, is that it is the product of inference (*anumāṇika*).³⁶ Conceived independently of Upaniṣadic study, *pradhāna* is subsequently read into the Upaniṣads as an interpretive hypothesis. Śaṅkara implies that the Sāṃkhyas' appeal to scripture was little more than an afterthought, a vain attempt to imbue their doctrines with underserved legitimacy. In keeping with their view that the Upaniṣads were hopelessly ambiguous apart from rational reflection, the Sāṃkhyas conceded that, from a purely exegetical point of view, brahman and *pradhāna* have equally plausible claims to Upaniṣadic purport.³⁷ What tips the balance in favor of *pradhāna* is its greater plausibility from a rational point of view. *Pradhāna*, by virtue of its composite nature that allows it to undergo transformation, is more plausibly understood as the world's material cause than is the simple and unchangeable brahman.³⁸

Śaṅkara refuses to be drawn into a debate with his Sāṃkhya opponent on the latter's terms. Although he promises a refutation of the Sāṃkhya hypothesis later on in his commentary on II.1.4, here Śaṅkara all but concedes the greater plausibility of the Sāṃkhya position. Unwavering in his exegetical focus, however, Śaṅkara declares this consid-

³⁵ Larson, *Classical Sāṃkhya*, 219.

³⁶ Shastri, *BSūBh*, 100, lines 3–4 (I.1.5): "sāṃkhyādāyas tu pariniṣṭhaṃ vastu pramāṇāntaragamyam eveti manyamānāḥ pradhānadīni kāraṇāntarāṇy-anumānās" (The Sāṃkhyas and others, assuming that an established [*pariniṣṭhaṃ* = *siddham*] reality is accessible to means of cognition other [than scripture], infer other causal principles, such as *pradhāna*).

³⁷ Ibid., 101, lines 4–5: "yāni vedāntavākyāni sarvajñasya sarvaśakter brahmaṇo jagat-kāraṇatvaṃ darśayanūti avocās tāni pradhānakāraṇapakṣe 'pi yojayitum śakyante" (Those Upaniṣadic texts that you [Vedāntists] claimed reveal the omniscient and omnipotent brahman as the world cause can also be reconciled with the view that *pradhāna* is the world cause).

³⁸ Ibid., 102, lines 8–9: "api ca pradhānasyānekātmakasya parīṇāmasambhavāt kāraṇatvapapattir mṛdādivat; nāsaṃhatasyaikātmakasya brahmaṇa ity" (Composite *pradhāna*, on account of its capacity to undergo modification, more closely resembles familiar material causes like clay and is therefore more plausibly conceived as the world cause than is the uniform and simple brahman).

eration to be irrelevant. However plausible it might seem on the surface, the Sāṃkhya hypothesis is to be rejected for the simple reason that it is not supported in the Upaniṣads.³⁹

What disqualifies *pradhāna* from consideration as the world's cause are Upaniṣadic passages such as Chāndogya 6.2.3 and Aitareya 1.1.1–2 that speak of an act of visualization (*ikṣā*) preceding creation (*ikṣāpūrvikām sṛṣṭim*). Here Śaṅkara's commentary closely follows the *Brahma-sūtra*.⁴⁰ Although such passages are well attested in the major Upaniṣads, it would be naive to deny that an interest in refuting Sāṃkhya played a crucial role in lifting up these passages for special attention. After all, it is well known that even interpreters sincerely committed to following scriptural texts have many interpretive stratagems at their disposal in order to get around passages that interfere with their interpretive interests. Here exegetical considerations are inextricably bound up with apologetic ones.

When combined with passages such as Chāndogya 6.1 that speak of brahman as the cosmological substrate, this affirmation of brahman as an intelligent, deliberative causal agent results in a concept of brahman utterly transcending human powers of intuitive comprehension. A transcendent conception of brahman is generated from the juxtaposition of two logically irreconcilable claims. We witness this emergence of transcendence out of contradiction in the topical section, or *adhikaraṇa*, consisting of the five sutras of I.4.23–27. Here Śaṅkara affirms brahman as the world's material (*upādāna*) as well as efficient (*nimitta*) cause. The problematic dealt with in this *adhikaraṇa* presupposes the result of I.1.5ff., namely, that brahman, against the claims of the Sāṃkhyas, is a deliberative causal agent. The *pūrvapakṣin* appeals to this result in arguing that only efficient causality can be plausibly attributed to brahman (*nimittakāraṇatvam eva brahmaṇaḥ*). Causality preceded by deliberation is observed only with respect to efficient causes like potters and goldsmiths.⁴¹ Moreover, efficient causality exempts the changeless

³⁹ Ibid., 108, lines 2–3: “yad apy uktam pradhānasyānekātmakatvān mṛdādivat kāraṇatvopapattir nāsamphatasya brahmaṇa iti, tat pradhānasyāśabdatvenaiva pratyuktam” (What was said above—namely, that *pradhāna*, on account of its composite nature, is, like clay and other material causes, more plausibly regarded as the world cause than is the simple brahman—this is refuted by the simple fact that *pradhāna* is not mentioned in scripture).

⁴⁰ Note that the proper identification of the world cause is rooted in the problem of reconciling two Chāndogya texts, namely, 6.1 and 6.2. This observation supports Nakamura's thesis that the teaching of the *Brahma-sūtra* was originally based on the Chāndogya Upaniṣad and later extended and adapted to the other Upaniṣads; see Nakamura, *History*, 429–31.

⁴¹ Shastri, *BSūBh*, 338, lines 5–6: “ikṣāpūrvakam ca kartṛtvam nimittakāraṇeṣv eva kulālādiṣu dṛṣṭam” (Causality preceded by deliberation is known only with respect to efficient causes like potters and the like).

and pure brahman from the requirement that the (material) cause share the same defiled nature as its effect.⁴²

Against this argument the Vedānta *siddhāntin* affirms the material causality of brahman by reaffirming principles that, if taken on their own, readily lend themselves to a Sāṃkhya interpretation. He appeals to the principle of the nondifference (*ananyatva*, *avyatirekatva*) of cause and effect, presupposed in Uddālaka Āruṇī's promise, in Chāndogya 6, to impart to Śvetaketu a knowledge of that by which all else is known (*ekena vijñānena sarvam anyad avijñātam api vijñātaṃ bhavati*).⁴³ A little later, following up on sutra I.4.26's mention of the principle of modification (*ātmakṛteḥ pariṇāmāt*), he argues that brahman causes himself to be transformed (*pariṇamayām āsa-ātmānam*) as the innermost nature of the resultant modifications.⁴⁴ Śaṅkara is fully aware that the affirmation of brahman's material causality in a context presupposing his agency renders the nature of brahman's causality incomprehensible. He concludes this section by declaring irrelevant the opponent's argument that deliberative causality appears in the world only with respect to efficient causes. Empirical experience is not decisive here, for brahman is not an object of inference.⁴⁵

Such a transcendent conception of brahman, generated from the twin affirmation of brahman's efficient and material causality, forms the basis of the authority of the Upaniṣadic corpus. Here Vedānta follows its Mīmāṃsā cousin in founding its authoritative texts on an "object" inaccessible to ordinary means of cognition. Since brahman, like the Mīmāṃsā principle of dharma, is inaccessible to the worldly *pramāṇas*, the Upaniṣadic texts that have brahman as their purport cannot be

⁴² See *ibid.*, 338, lines 8–10: "kāryaṃ cedam jagatsāyavayavam acetanam asuddham ca dṛśyate kāraṇenāpi tasya tādrśenaiva bhavitavyaṃ, kāryakāraṇayorḥ sārūpyadarśanāt" (Moreover, as this world, the effect, manifests itself as insentient, impure, and composite, its cause must also be of the same nature. For cause and effect are understood to be of the same nature).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 339, lines 7–8 (I.4.23): "taccopadānakāraṇavijñāne sarvavijñānaṃ sambhavatyupadānakāraṇāvyatirekāt kāryasya; nimittakāraṇāvyatirekastu kāryasya nāsti" (It is possible for one to know everything when the material cause is known. This is possible [only] because the effect is not separate from its material cause. But this nonseparation of cause and effect is not true with respect to the efficient cause).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 341, lines 8–9: "pūrvasiddho 'pi hi sannātmā viśeṣeṇa vikārātmanā pariṇamayām asātmānamiti" (Even though the self is an established and present reality, he still causes himself to be transformed into distinct modifications).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 342, lines 7–8 (I.4.27): "yat punar idam uktam iksāpūrvakaṃ kartṛtvaṃ nimittakāraṇeṣveva kulālādiṣu loke dṛṣṭaṃ nopādāneṣvityādi, tatpratryucyate: na lokavad iha bhavitavyam. na hy ayam anumānagamyo 'rthaḥ" (What was argued above—namely, that causality preceded by reflection appears in the world only in the case of efficient causes, like potters, and not in that of material causes—this is refuted as follows: what is to be affirmed here need not be like anything appearing in the world. For the object here is not to be grasped through inference). On the orientation toward Upaniṣadic authority over reason in the *Brahma-sūtra* itself, see also the discussion of *Brahma-sūtra* II.1.26–27 in Nakamura, *History*, 476.

rendered superfluous, much less contradicted, by ordinary forms of knowledge and experience.⁴⁶ Here Vedānta reveals its close kinship with Mīmāṃsā.⁴⁷ As a transcendent reality inaccessible to the worldly *pramāṇas*, brahman ensures against a slide into redundancy that would deprive the Upaniṣads of their authority.⁴⁸ At the same time, brahman, insofar as it is a present reality (albeit a transcendent one), prevents the subordination of the Upaniṣads to the injunctive portion of the Veda, as claimed by the Mīmāṃsā.

Like a play of mirrors, the development of the Vedāntic concept of brahman in the context of a repudiation of Sāṃkhya cosmology has a circular quality to it. On the one hand, the assertion of Upaniṣadic authority against Sāṃkhya rationalism leads to the conceptualization of brahman as a transcendent object. On the other, this conception of brahman in turn justifies the independent validity of the Upaniṣadic corpus.

ŚAṆKARA'S TWIST ON REALIST VEDĀNTA

As I suggested above, the *Brahma-sūtra-Bhāṣya*'s preoccupation with Sāṃkhya theories is not original with Śaṅkara but rather belongs to an earlier phase of the Vedānta tradition. Although Śaṅkara's is the oldest

⁴⁶ Shastri, *BSūBh*, 360, line 8 (II.1.6): "āgamamātrasamadhigamya eva tvayam artho dharmaṇat" (Rather, this object [namely, brahman], like the principle of dharma, is to be known only from the scriptures).

⁴⁷ On the close kinship between early Vedānta and the Mīmāṃsā school, see Nakamura, *History*, 409–13.

⁴⁸ Shastri, *BSūBh*, 360, lines 6–8 (II.1.6): "yat tu uktaṃ pariniṣpannatvād brahmaṇi pramāṇāntarāṇi sambhaveyur iti tadapi manorathamātram. rūpādyabhāvāddhi nāyamarthaḥ pratyakṣasya gocaraḥ. liṅgādyabhāvācca nānumānādīnām" (The above-mentioned claim—namely, that brahman must be accessible to the *pramāṇas* since it is an actually existing reality—is nothing more than an illusion. For this object does not lie within the range of perception since it does not have form. Nor does it lie in the range of the various forms of inference since it is devoid of distinguishing marks). See also *ibid.*, 63, line 4 (I.1.4): "na ca pariniṣṭhitavastusvarūpatve 'pi pratyakṣādiviśayatvaṃ brahmaṇaḥ" (Though it is brahman's nature to be a thoroughly known reality, still, brahman is not an object of the worldly *pramāṇas*). More ambiguous, perhaps, is the question of the *ātman*'s accessibility to the worldly *pramāṇas*. Tilmann Vetter's suggestion, in *Studien zur Lehre und Entwicklung Śaṅkaras* ([Vienna, 1979], 118), of a division of labor between "reason" and revelation corresponding to *ātman* and brahman, respectively, "Śāstra (Schriftzitate und das mit ihnen begründete theologische System) macht das Absolute zugänglich, Yukti (rationale Überlegung) den Kern der Person" (Śāstra [scriptural citations and the theological system based on them] makes the Absolute accessible; Yukti [rational reflection] makes the core of the person accessible), suggests a greater willingness on Śaṅkara's part to concede the empirical knowability of the *ātman*. Yet Śaṅkara does not seem to have much confidence in (independent) reason's ability to know the self, either. This is suggested, above all, by his criticism of the Mīmāṃsā tenet regarding the accessibility of the self to perception and inference (Halbfass, *Tradition and Reflection*, 148); for a discussion and critique of Vetter's view, see 142, 177–80.

extant commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, it largely preserves the perspective of an earlier tradition.⁴⁹ This is indicated by the surprising level of agreement between Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya* and that of Bhāskara, who otherwise shows extreme hostility toward the teachings of Śaṅkara.⁵⁰ Ingalls explains this agreement with the hypothesis, reminiscent of the Q hypothesis in New Testament studies, that Śaṅkara and Bhāskara both relied upon an earlier, although no longer extant, commentary.⁵¹ More recent scholarship has since called into question the claim that Bhāskara relied on an earlier commentary besides Śaṅkara's.⁵² Nevertheless, Ingalls's core proposition that Śaṅkara relied on an earlier commentator in composing his *Bhāṣya* still stands. Bhāskara and Śaṅkara's followers both refer to this earlier commentator simply as the "commentator" (*vyatikāra*). Ingalls, following this tradition, dubs him the "Proto-commentator."⁵³

Now in those passages where Śaṅkara departs from the earlier tradition—that is, the tradition represented by the Protocommentator and also, albeit indirectly, Bhāskara—a new adversary comes clearly into view. This is the view, associated with precisely the realist Bhedābheda perspective characteristic of that earlier tradition, that ritual action plays a positive role in the attainment of liberation. This conviction is expressed in the doctrine of the "coordination of knowledge and works," or *jñānakarmasamuccayavāda*. In rejecting the *jñānakarmasamuccaya* doctrine, Śaṅkara is taking up one side in a controversy in the brahmanical tradition between the single-staff and triple-staff traditions of renunciation. Representing the single-staff tradition, Śaṅkara defined renunciation—or, to be more precise, its highest and paradigmatic form—in terms of a complete withdrawal from ritual activity.⁵⁴ The triple-staff tradition, by contrast, held that a renunciant retained his brahmanical status—and thus ensured the legitimacy of his renunciation—only through a continuing commitment, albeit one greatly reduced, to ritual activity.⁵⁵ Two ideas that will later attain the status of formal doctrine in Advaita are developed in the context of this polemic.

⁴⁹ See the seminal article of Daniel H. H. Ingalls, "Śaṅkara's Arguments against the Buddhists," *Philosophy East and West* 3, no. 4 (January 1954): 291–92.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 293; see also Nakamura, *History*, 458–59; Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1940), 3:1.

⁵¹ Ingalls, "Śaṅkara's Arguments," 294.

⁵² See Rüping, *Studien zur Frühgeschichte*, 65–68. Rüping overturns Ingalls's reasoning that Bhāskara could not have possibly copied directly from Śaṅkara. For the latter's view, see "Śaṅkara's Arguments," 293–94.

⁵³ Ingalls, "Śaṅkara's Arguments," 293.

⁵⁴ See Patrick Olivelle, *Renunciation in Hinduism*, vol. 1, *The Debate and the Advaita Argument* (Vienna, 1986), 32 and *passim*.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 34–35.

These are the unreality of the phenomenal world apart from brahman, on the one hand, and the impersonal, qualityless (*nirguṇa*) conception of brahman, on the other.

An important source for these doctrines is Śaṅkara's commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* II.1.14. This text makes it clear that these two characteristically Advaita doctrines are firmly rooted in the practical disagreement about the role of rites in the attainment of salvation. The aspects of difference and nondifference that the Bhedābheda-vādins attribute jointly to brahman neatly correspond, respectively, to the ritual-practical and gnoseological components of the orthodox brahman's quest for liberation.⁵⁶ The aspect of multiplicity in brahman grounds the world of multiplicity—characterized by the distinction among actor, action, and result—that is presupposed by human activity, both social and ritual. For Śaṅkara, the attribution of an aspect of multiplicity to brahman reflects a need to justify such action.⁵⁷ He feels that such a need is not only unfounded but also counterproductive. For the affirmation of a real basis to worldly activity undermines the very notion of emancipatory knowledge and therewith liberation itself. The Bhedābheda view implies a failure to acknowledge some kind of false cognition as the basis of samsaric existence—in other words, a kind of cognition whose simple removal brings liberation.⁵⁸

Śaṅkara's interest in depriving ritual activity of an ontological basis obliges him to break from the traditional understanding of the concept of nonseparation (*ananyatva*) as it pertains to the relation between the world and brahman. In keeping with the realist orientation of the *Brahma-sūtra*,⁵⁹ the concept of *ananyatva* affirmed in *Brahma-sūtra* II.1.14 was very likely originally modeled after the "identity in differ-

⁵⁶ Shastri, *BSūBh*, 375, lines 1–2: "tatratikātvāmśena jñānān mokṣavyavahāraḥ setsyati. nānāmśena tu karmakaṇḍāśrayau laukikavaidikavyavahārau setsyata iti" (The experience of liberation from knowledge will come to fruition by virtue of the aspect of unity in brahman. Conversely, the worldly and Vedic experiences based on the ritual portion of the Veda will come to fruition by virtue of the aspect of multiplicity in brahman).

⁵⁷ Ibid., 375, lines 8–9: "tadāśraye samastaḥ svābhāviko vyavahāro bādhito bhavati yatprasiddhaye nānātvāmśo 'paro brahmaṇaḥ kalpeta" (In order to establish a principle upon which all conventional experience can be based—experience whose nature is to be sublated—a nonultimate aspect of multiplicity is imagined in brahman).

⁵⁸ Ibid., 376, lines 6–8: "na cāsmindarśane jñānānmokṣa ityupapadyate, samyagjñānāpanodyasya kasyacinmithyājñānasya saṃsārakāraṇatvenānābhyupagamāt. ubhayasatyatāyām hi kaṭham ekatvajñānena nānātvajñānam apanudyata ityucyate" (If one accepts the [Bhedābheda] viewpoint, then the idea of liberation from knowledge becomes implausible. For this viewpoint fails to recognize some kind of false knowledge as the cause of samsaric existence, that is, a kind of knowledge that could be dispelled by true knowledge. For if we suppose that both multiplicity and unity have a basis in reality, then how can a knowledge of multiplicity be dispelled by a knowledge of unity?).

⁵⁹ Nakamura, *History*, 490.

ence" relation between the universal and the particular.⁶⁰ Thus, brahman functions as a unifying principle with respect to the things of the world in the same way that the universal unifies and subsumes its particular instantiations. That early Vedāntins conceived brahman's relation to the world along these lines is suggested by the doctrine of brahman as the "great universal" (*mahāsāmānyam*) that was apparently held by some earlier teachers of Vedānta mentioned by Maṇḍanamiśra and Kumārila.⁶¹ Inasmuch as the particular instantiations of a universal are real, this understanding of the *ananyatva* concept implies that the things of the phenomenal world have a measure of independent existence. Śaṅkara offers an interpretation of this concept that is radically different. According to Śaṅkara, the effect is nondifferent (*ananya*) from its cause in the sense that it cannot exist apart from its cause (*kāryakāraṇayor ananyatvaṃ—kāraṇād vyatirekeṇābhāvaḥ kāryasya*).⁶² Although Śaṅkara avoids the use of the term *vivarta*,⁶³ his interpretation of *ananyatvaṃ* here is one of the principal sources for the later, illusionistic doctrine of *vivartavāda*, that is, the teaching that the phenomenal world is only an apparent manifestation (*vivarta*) of its underlying cause, brahman. According to the traditional view reflected in the

⁶⁰ For this argument, see Mysore Hiriyanna, "What Is Ananyatva?" in *Festschrift Moriz Winternitz*, ed. Otto Stein and Wilhelm Gampert (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1933), 223. See also Daniel H. H. Ingalls, "Bhāskara the Vedāntin," *Philosophy East and West* 17, nos. 1–4 (January–October 1967): 66, for an exposition of Bhāskara's *bhedābheda* understanding of the *ananyatva* relation. Ingalls (66) translates a passage from Bhāskara's commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* I.1.4. An especially relevant portion of that passage is as follows: "All things, so far as they belong to the class concepts existence, object of knowledge, substance, etc., are unitary; and as individuals, from their mutual differences, they are plural." For the corresponding Sanskrit, see Pandit Vindhyesvarī Prasāda Dvivedin, ed., *Brahmasūtrabhāṣyam ŚrīBhāskaraśrīyaviracitam*, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series (Varanasi, 1991), 17, lines 3–5: "na hyabhinnaṃ bhinnameva vā kvacit kenacid darśayitum śakyate. sattā-jñeyatva-dravyatvādi-sāmānyātmanā sarvam abhinnaṃ, vyaktātmanā tu parasparavaiśaṅgyād bhinnam."

⁶¹ See, e.g., *Śloka-varttika*, Pratyakṣavāda, 114 (in *The Mīmāṃsā-Śloka-Vārttika of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa*, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series no. 11, ed. Rama Sastri Tailanga [Benares, 1898–99]), where Kumārila mentions the view held by some that the "great universal" (*mahāsāmānyam*) is the object of perception ("mahāsāmānyam anyais tu dravyam sad iti cocyate"). In his *Brahmasiddhi* (37, lines 21–22; see *Brahmasiddhi by Ācārya Maṇḍanamiśra*, ed. S. Kuppaswami Sastri [Madras, 1937]), Maṇḍana similarly refers to "others well versed in the knowledge of brahman" who teach that brahman has the form (*rūpa*) of the universal ("ato 'nyair brahmavidyābhīyuktauḥ sāmānyarūpaṃ brahma nirūpitam"). The vague references here possibly point to teachers associated with the school of Bhartṛhārī.

⁶² Shastri, *BSūBh*, 373, line 2: "tasmātkāraṇātparamārthatō 'nanyatvaṃ vyatirekeṇābhāvaḥ kāryasyāvagamyate" (Therefore "nondifference" is to be understood to mean that, ultimately, the effect does not exist separately from its cause). See also Hiriyanna, "What Is Ananyatva?" 221.

⁶³ Richard De Smet suggests that Śaṅkara avoided the term *vivarta* because of its association with the Śābdādvaita conception of *bhedābheda*. See his "Radhakrishnan's Interpretation of Śaṅkara," in *Radhakrishnan: Centenary Volume*, ed. G. Parthasarathi and D. P. Chattopadhyaya (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 56.

Brahma-sūtra, by contrast, the phenomenal world represents a real transformation (*pariṇāma*) of brahman.⁶⁴

Śaṅkara's uncompromising insistence on the immutability of brahman and his explicit denial that brahman undergoes modification threaten to unravel the conception of brahman as world cause, the hard-won achievement of the *Brahma-sūtra*.⁶⁵ Śaṅkara himself acknowledges this concern in an objection posed by the *pūrvapakṣin*: thanks to their preoccupation with the idea of absolute unity, the proponents of the idea of a changeless brahman effectively deny the notions of the ruler and the ruled and, in so doing, contradict the proposition that God (*īśvara*) is the world's cause.⁶⁶ This *pūrvapakṣin* may not feel that Śaṅkara's bald assertion to the contrary holds up particularly well in the context of discussions of the ontologically nebulous *nāmarūpe* (name and form) as the source of the world and of Śaṅkara's version of the Two Truths doctrine.⁶⁷ It is not, however, my concern here to evaluate, from a strictly philosophical point of view, the success of Śaṅkara's concept of *nāmarūpe* in reconciling Vedāntic cosmology with the unity and impassability of brahman.⁶⁸ Rather, I would like to suggest that the combination of assertion and relativizing commentary that constitutes Śaṅkara's response here characterizes Śaṅkara's interpretation of II.1.14 as a kind of double-voiced discourse. In other words, Śaṅkara's commentary preserves the older, Upaniṣadic cosmology but gives it a new spin. As an instance of double-voiced discourse, Śaṅkara's commentary on II.1.14 introduces a new intention into the older cos-

⁶⁴ On the realist orientation of the *Brahma-sūtra*, and its support of the modification (*pariṇāma*) theory in particular, see Nakamura, *History*, 489–90 and passim.

⁶⁵ See Shastri, *BSūBh*, 381, lines 1–2: “kūṭasthaṃ ca nityaṃ brahma sarvavikriyāpratīṣedhād ityavocāma” (We said that brahman was immutable and eternal, on account of the prohibition of all modifications).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 381, lines 9–10: “kūṭasthabrahmātmavādina ekatvaikāntyād īṣitīṣitavyābhāva īśvarakāraṇapratijñāvirodha iti cet” (Thanks to their insistence on the principle of absolute unity, the proponents of a changeless brahman, by effectively denying both the ruler and the ruled, contradict the proposition that the Lord is the world cause).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 382, line 1: “sā pratijñā tadavasthaiva na tadviruddho ‘rthaḥ” (This proposition still stands; the meaning is not contradicted by this).

⁶⁸ Vetter, *Studien*, 129, nicely summarizes what is at stake for Śaṅkara in proposing the *nāmarūpe* concept: “An einigen Stellen des BrSūBh, wo Ś entsprechend der Tradition der BrSū das Hervorgehen der Welt aus dem Brahman lehrt, versucht er die Gefahr, die der Unberührtheit des Brahman als der Entität der Erlösung droht, dadurch abzuschwächen, dass er Name-und-Gestalt (*nāmarūpe*), von denen man nicht sagen kann, dass sie [mit dem Brahman] identisch, aber auch nicht, dass sie [von ihm] verschieden sind (*tattvānyatvābhyām anirvacanīya*), als den eigentlichen Ursprung der Dinge hinstellt” (In certain places in the BrSūBh, where Śaṅkara, conforming to the tradition of the BrSū, teaches the emergence of the world from brahman, he tries to mitigate against the threat this poses to the impassability of brahman as the “entity” of liberation. This he does by setting forth name and form [*nāmarūpe*]—that about which one cannot say either that it is identical [with brahman] or that it is different [from him; *tattvānyatvābhyām anirvacanīya*]—as the actual origin of things).

mological discourse, using it to say something else.⁶⁹ Indeed, Śaṅkara admits as much when he declares cosmogonic myths to be means of expressing the fundamental unity of being, as opposed to being taken literally.⁷⁰ Śaṅkara uses traditional brahmanical creation discourse, appropriately spun in an Advaitic direction, to make a point about the conditional validity of ritual and social practices. Viewing Śaṅkara's reworking of traditional Vedāntic cosmology in terms of Ian Ramsey's theory of models and qualifiers, we could perhaps regard the perspective that would later come to be systematized as *vivartavāda* as a realistic brahmanical-Upaniṣadic cosmology made odd.

Regarding Śaṅkara's Advaitic perspective as internally constituted by the realistic discourse that it spins makes unnecessary many of the speculative hypotheses proposed to account for the presence of realistic elements in Śaṅkara's thought. I am thinking in particular of the attempts on the part of scholars such as Paul Hacker and Tilmann Vetter to correlate the realist and illusionist tendencies in Śaṅkara's thought to different stages in his philosophical development.⁷¹ Along the lines of John Taber's hypothesis that such developmental theories are often proposed in default of an adequate philosophical understanding of Śaṅkara's texts,⁷² I suspect that such theories partly reflect a failure to acknowledge the double-voiced character of Śaṅkara's thought.⁷³ They effectively pull apart the dialectical unity of Śaṅkara's double-voiced, commentarial discourse by assigning the voices to different phases in his career. According to Hacker's well-known conversion theory, for

⁶⁹ Thereby rendering it conditional. See Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 190: "The original direct and unconditional meaning now serves new purposes, which take possession of it from within and render it conditional."

⁷⁰ Paul Hacker, "Distinctive Features of the Doctrine and the Terminology of Śaṅkara," in *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedānta*, ed. Wilhelm Halbfass (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1995), 77–78; Ingalls, "Bhāskara the Vedāntin," 64. See, e.g., Shastri, *BSūBh*, 884, lines 7–8 (IV.3.14): "tāsām ekatvapratipādanaparatvāt. mṛdādidiṣṭāntair iha sato brahmaṇa ekasya satyatvaṃ vikāśasya cānṛtatvaṃ pratipādayac chāstraṃ notpattyādiparam bhavitum arhati" (For the concern of the Upaniṣadic texts is to establish the unity [of brahman]. The scripture here is establishing, with the help of illustrations like that of the clay, the reality of the one true brahman, and the unreality of the modifications. It is not concerned with [establishing] creation and so forth); see also I.4.14 and II.1.33.

⁷¹ See Paul Hacker, "Śaṅkara the Yogin and Śaṅkara the Advaitin," in Halbfass, *Philology and Confrontation*, 101–34; Vetter, *Studien*.

⁷² Taber, "Reason, Revelation, and Idealism," 285, 293, and *passim*. Taber suggests that such developmental theories reflect a one-sided preoccupation with a philological-historical, as opposed to a properly philosophical, approach to Indian materials. In citing Taber's essay I do not mean to suggest that he would necessarily approve of the genealogical, as opposed to strictly philosophical, approach to Śaṅkara that I have taken in this article.

⁷³ I withhold final judgment on both Vetter's and Hacker's theories, since both are grounded in a careful study of texts lying outside the scope of this essay. This withholding of judgment is especially appropriate with respect to Hacker's theory, which arises out of the problematic of the authorship of the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya-Vivaraṇa*.

example, the realist elements of Śaṅkara's oeuvre stem from a pre-Advaita phase of his career when he wrote as an adherent of Yoga.⁷⁴ Yet realist elements stubbornly persist in Śaṅkara's postconversion, Advaita works. Hacker's explanation of these as mere survivals from Śaṅkara's yogic past, as lapses into old habits of thought,⁷⁵ might appear as a makeshift intended to rescue a dubious theory from the evidence. That these realist elements cannot be so easily dismissed is indicated by the fact that at least one other scholar, Srinivasa Rao, makes them the basis for a realist interpretation of Śaṅkara.⁷⁶ In what appears to be an attempt to rescue the great name of Śaṅkara from orientalist and Christian apologetic critiques of "Hindu" quietism and world negation, Rao argues—somewhat unconvincingly in my view—that Śaṅkara never taught that the world was unreal.⁷⁷ Such a view appears only later among Śaṅkara's followers.⁷⁸ Although the interpretations of Hacker and Rao differ radically with respect to Śaṅkara's classic Advaita works such as the *Brahma-sūtra-Bhāṣya*, the two interpretations are similar in that they both seek to separate and compartmentalize the realist and illusionist aspects of Śaṅkara's thought. The line of demarcation that Hacker places at an alleged moment of conversion Rao shifts to the point where Śaṅkara's teaching is (mis)appropriated by his followers. Both interpretations presuppose what might be called a monological understanding of Śaṅkara's discourse, an assumption that is typical of much of the scholarship on Śaṅkara's "philosophy." An approach that fully appreciates the inherently commentarial and apologetic nature of Śaṅkara's works, by contrast, has little difficulty acknowledging the intimate coexistence of the realist and illusionist aspects of his thought—what we might call, borrowing a phrase from Bakhtin, an "intra-atomic counterpoint of voices."⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Hacker, "Śaṅkara the Yogin," 104–8, 127–28, and *passim*.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 115, 122, 126, 127.

⁷⁶ Srinivasa Rao, "Two Myths in Advaita," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 24, no. 3 (1996): 265–79.

⁷⁷ Rao, following Śaṅkara, reconciles the immutability of brahman with the nondifference (*ananyatva*) of brahman and the world—and hence the affirmation of the reality of the world—by effectively denying what Aristotle would call "substantial change." Change occurs only with respect to the accidental "features," the "names and forms," of things (see "Two Myths in Advaita," 266, 275). Rao's analysis, based as it is on a denial of substantial change, simply begs the question: is the world we know—that is, as constituted by name and form—unreal for Śaṅkara? Thus, the thesis that Śaṅkara affirmed the reality of this world holds only as long as one accepts a rather counterintuitive concept of "the world." The uncertainty and ambiguity concerning the question of whether Śaṅkara denied the world is simply displaced to the question of how one describes the world.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 266–67, 271, and *passim*.

⁷⁹ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 221. To the extent that Śaṅkara's works are double voiced, the perspective of the particular text he is commenting on is constitutive of his thought at that time. This notion of the inseparability of text and commentary would account for the

Śaṅkara's Advaitic "qualification" of the cosmological "model" of brahman in the *Brahma-sūtra* implies a qualityless, nonrelational, and—to the extent that the notion of personality presupposes relationality—impersonal conception of brahman.⁸⁰ Inasmuch as they are relational concepts, brahman's divine attributes—his lordship (*īśvaratva*), omniscience (*sarvajñatva*), and omnipotence (*sarvaśaktitva*)—presuppose a phenomenal world that has no existence, no substance, apart from brahman. A wall stands between the forms of religious thought and practice presupposing these divine attributes and the unconditioned reality of the self.⁸¹ Liberation results only from the realization of brahman devoid of all qualities.⁸²

Another important source for this impersonal, qualityless conception of brahman is Śaṅkara's commentary on I.1.12–19, an *adhikaraṇa* that concerns the relation of brahman to bliss (*ānanda*). The topic is explored exegetically, through a discussion of the doctrine of the five sheaths (*kośa*) in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad. Of specific interest is brah-

differences that appear when Śaṅkara's works are placed side by side. It seems to me that Sengaku Mayeda's explanation for the differences between the *Gauḍapādīya* and the *Brahma-sūtra Bhāṣyas*, as summarized by this quote from Gregory Darling, hits the nail on the head: "Mayeda's point, however, is that the *Gauḍapādīyabhāṣya* represents an attempt to reinterpret the Buddhist tendencies of the Gauḍa tradition along Advaita lines, whereas in the *Brahma-sūtrabhāṣya*, Śaṅkara tries to reinterpret a bhedābheda text along Advaita lines" (Gregory J. Darling, *An Evaluation of the Vedāntic Critique of Buddhism* [Delhi: Motilal, 1987], 114; Mayeda's original article is "On the Author of the *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad* and the *Gauḍapādīya-bhāṣya*," in *Dr. V. Raghavan Felicitation Volume*, ed. V. Raghavan and N. Sri Ram [Madras: Adyar Library and Research Center, 1967–68]). Moreover, the perspective of the particular text Śaṅkara is commenting upon—whether it be the *Gauḍapāda-kārikā*, the *Brahma-sūtra*, or, if authentic, the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*—is such a major factor in determining the shape of his thought in a given work that I have doubts whether a distinct developmental factor can be realistically discerned, especially in the absence of a certain chronology of Śaṅkara's authentic works.

⁸⁰ The conventional characterization of Śaṅkara's *nirguṇa* brahman as impersonal has not gone unchallenged. Richard De Smet in particular has proposed a nonanthropological concept of personhood (informed by the tradition of Christian Trinitarian speculation) that is compatible with Śaṅkara's concept of *para* brahman (see "Radhakrishnan's Interpretation of Śaṅkara," 65–66). For a thoughtful overview of the debate in Śaṅkara studies over whether it is appropriate to ascribe personhood to Śaṅkara's concept of *para* brahman, see Bradley Malkovsky, "The Personhood of Samkara's 'Para Brahman,'" *Journal of Religion* 77, no. 4 (October 1997): 541–62.

⁸¹ Shastri, *BSūBh*, 382, lines 10–12: "tad evam avidyātmakopādhiparicchedāpekṣam eveśvarasyeśvaratvaṃ sarvajñatvaṃ sarvaśaktitvaṃ ca na paramārthatō vidyayāpāstasārvopādhisvarūpa ātmanīśitṛīṣitavyasārvajñatvādivyavahāra upapadyate" (The lordship, omniscience, and omniscience of the Lord depend on separated, conditioning factors constituted by ignorance. From the perspective of ultimate reality, experiences oriented toward divine attributes like omniscience—that is, attributes presupposing a distinction between the ruler and the ruled—are not worthy of the self, whose nature it is to have all conditioning factors swept away by knowledge).

⁸² *Ibid.*, 381, lines 5–6: "brahmaprakaraṇe sarvadharmaviśeṣarahitabrahmadarśanād eva phalasiddhau satyām" (In this discussion concerning brahman, the attainment of the result [i.e., liberation] becomes actual only from the realization of brahman devoid of all distinctions and qualities).

man's relation to the fifth and final sheath of the self consisting of bliss (*ānandamaya*). The *adhikaraṇa* is striking because in its final sūtra (I.12.19) Śaṅkara dramatically reverses the conclusion developed in the previous seven (I.1.12–18). This previous conclusion, which most likely represents an earlier, pre-Advaita line of Vedāntic interpretation, states that the bliss sheath was indeed the highest self and thus brahman.⁸³ Correcting this conclusion in I.1.19, Śaṅkara argues that the highest brahman transcends even the innermost sheath consisting of bliss as its ground and cause.⁸⁴

This *adhikaraṇa* beautifully illustrates the double-voiced character of the *Brahma-sūtra-Bhāṣya* in that it highlights, as Clooney puts it, “the permanent openness of the Text to rereading and the articulation of new positions.”⁸⁵ It demonstrates how one discourse can be subjected to another that redirects its meaning to different purposes.⁸⁶ Śaṅkara's “reversal” here exemplifies the modern hermeneutical principle that no text, even the most authoritative, is exempt from a later appropriation that renders its meaning conditional. A careful reading of I.1.12–19, however, shows that Śaṅkara does not simply negate the previous *siddhānta*, now reduced to a mere *uttarapakṣa*.⁸⁷ Rather, Śaṅkara's reversal reflects a shift in concern that places reflection on the doctrine of the sheaths in the context of a different problematic. This shift in concern corresponds to the two apologetic moments we have been discussing in this essay, namely, from the rejection of Sāṃkhya cosmogony to that of the salvific efficacy of works. The transition is sufficiently abrupt to force a reversal of the *Bhāṣya*'s interpretive judgment on the Taittirīya text. In other words, the dramatic nature of Śaṅkara's revision reflects the discontinuity between the problematics corresponding, respectively, to the *uttarapakṣa* and the *siddhānta*.

This underlying shift from one problematic to another can be discerned in what Śaṅkara says in his prologue to this *adhikaraṇa*. After noting the accomplishment of the *Brahma-sūtra* text up to this point—namely, establishing brahman, and not insentient *pradhāna*, as the

⁸³ Ibid., 123, line 3 (I.1.16): “itaścānandamayaḥ para evātmā netaraḥ” (Hence the bliss sheath is the highest self, nothing else); see also 125, lines 4–5 (I.1.19): “tasmādānandamayaḥ parātmēti sthitam” (Therefore it is established that the bliss sheath is the highest self).

⁸⁴ Ibid., 130, line 1 (I.1.19): “sarvasya vikārajātasya sāmānandamayasya kāraṇatvena brahma vyapadiśyate—idaṃ sarvaṃ astjāta” (The text, “He created all that is,” represents brahman as the cause of all things born of modification, including the self consisting of bliss).

⁸⁵ Clooney, *Theology after Vedānta*, 52.

⁸⁶ Again, see Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 190, 233, and passim.

⁸⁷ On the reduction of the *siddhānta* to an *uttarapakṣa*, see Clooney, *Theology after Vedānta*, 52.

world cause—a *pūrvapakṣin* naively asks what there is left to talk about in the remaining text of the *Bhāṣya*.⁸⁸ After introducing the distinction between conditioned and unconditioned brahman,⁸⁹ Śaṅkara responds by stating what is at issue for him in the *adhikaraṇa*, namely, to determine whether salvific knowledge of the self (*sadyomuktikāraṇam ātmajñānam*) pertains to the former or the latter.⁹⁰ Śaṅkara is being a bit coy here when he suggests that there is still doubt when the question is expressed in these terms. Implicitly, his distinction between the two forms of brahman has already decided the question: knowledge (*jñāna*) clearly pertains to the unconditioned brahman. As was the case with II.1.14, what is at stake here is the question of whether religious activity contributes to liberation. Perhaps implicitly conceding the Mīmāṃsā concept of meditative injunctions (*upāsanavidhi*) while rejecting the Mīmāṃsā use of this principle to subordinate the Upaniṣads to the ritual portion of the Veda,⁹¹ Śaṅkara assimilates meditative practices (*upāsana*) to ritual activity. He views the former, again along Mīmāṃsā lines, as “internalized quasi-rituals.”⁹² In doing so, he is able to subsume a critique of Yoga into his rejection of the *jñānakarmasamuccaya* doctrine, a doctrine which, as we have seen, he regards as a salvifically fatal concession to Mīmāṃsā ritualism.⁹³ Meditative practice, no less than

⁸⁸ Shastri, *BSūBh*, 116, lines 3–7: “janmādyasya yataḥ’ ityārabhya ‘śrutatvācca’ ityevam antaiḥ sūtrair yānyudāhṛtāni vedāntavākyāni teṣāṃ sarvajñaḥ sarvaśaktir īśvaro jagato janmasthanitilayakāraṇam ityetyārthasya pratipāḍakatvaṃ nyāyapūrvakaṃ pratipāditam. gatisāmānyopanyāsenā ca sarve vedāntāścetanākāraṇavādina itī vyākhyātam. ataḥ parasya granthasya kimutthānamiti” (The point of those Vedāntic sentences, which were cited by the sutras beginning with I.1.2 and ending with I.1.11, was to establish the omniscient and omnipotent brahman as the cause of the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the world. And inasmuch as they share the same intention, all the Upaniṣads are explained as teaching a sentient principle as the world cause. From these considerations, what is the point of going through with the rest of the text?).

⁸⁹ Ibid., 116, lines 7–8: “dvirūpaṃ hi brahmāvagamyate, nāmarūpavikārabhedopādhipiṣṭaṃ, tadviparitaṃ ca sarvopādhipivārjitaṃ” (For brahman is understood to have two forms. The first is distinguished by differentiating, conditioning factors, that is, the modifications of name and form. The second form, by contrast, is free of all conditioning factors).

⁹⁰ Ibid., 118, lines 10–12: “evaṃ sadyomuktikāraṇam apy ātmajñānam upādhipiṣeṣadvāreṇopadiśyamānam apy avivakṣitopādhisambandhaviśeṣaṃ parāparaviśayatvena saṃdhiyamānaṃ vākyagatiparyālocanayā nirṇetavyaṃ bhavati” (Even if the knowledge of the self instantly brings about liberation, this knowledge is imparted with the help of distinctions and conditioning factors. Though [the intention of the Upaniṣads] is not to impart knowledge as characterized by a connection with conditioning factors, still the doubt arises as to whether this knowledge has as its object the lower or the higher brahman. This is to be determined through a deliberation on the sense of the [Upaniṣadic] sentences).

⁹¹ Halbfass, *Tradition and Reflection*, 150.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Compare also Shastri, *BSūBh*, 353, line 7–354, line 1 (II.1.3): “nirākaraṇaṃ tu na sām-khyajñānena vedanirapekṣeṇa yogamārgeṇa vā niḥśreyasamadhigamya itī” (The refutation

ritual activity, presupposes the duality of means and ends, thus placing it outside the nondual sphere of emancipatory knowledge.⁹⁴

The dichotomous nature of Śaṅkara's distinction between *jñāna* and *upāsana* should make us immediately suspicious of apologetic interests driving his analysis. The assimilation of meditation to ritual activity allows Śaṅkara to group Yoga, Mīmāṃsā, and Bhedābheda Vedānta together on one side of an apologetic divide. On the other side stands Śaṅkara's Advaita as the lone defender of pure Vedāntic knowledge. As if there were any doubt as to the relative ranking of these two paths, Śaṅkara correlates *jñāna* and *upāsana* with the higher and lower (*para* and *apara*) forms of brahman, respectively.⁹⁵ Like most apologetically motivated schemas, this one suppresses important aspects of the views that it relegates to positions of inferiority. In particular, as Halbfass notes, Śaṅkara fails to acknowledge the fact that the teachers of Yoga, no less than Śaṅkara, recognized the need to transcend a preoccupation with results and an acquisitive attitude.⁹⁶ More generally, his dichotomy shears off the cognitive connotations of *upāsana*, which the *Brahma-sūtra* most probably regarded as continuous with *jñāna*.⁹⁷

Given that the "results orientation" that Śaṅkara associates with meditation (and, a fortiori, ritual activity) forms the basis of his apologetically driven classification of religious practices, it is easy to see why he would be reluctant to follow the tradition in recognizing bliss as an essential attribute of brahman.⁹⁸ Bliss implies a relation—and hence a dualism—between the experience and the experiencer, or, in Śaṅkara's idiom, between the one who enjoys (*bhokṛ*) and what is enjoyed (*bhogyā*). Moreover, in suggesting that the realization of brahman culmi-

[of Sāṃkhya and Yoga] amounts to this: salvation is not to be attained through the yogic path or the knowledge of Sāṃkhya inasmuch as these means are independent of the Veda).

⁹⁴ We must, however, put Śaṅkara's apparent denigration of *upāsana* into perspective. Śaṅkara does acknowledge the value of *upāsana*, if only to wean the adherent from a habitual preoccupation with action (see Darling, *Evaluation*, 139, following Raghavan). Following the *Brahma-sūtra*—which, unlike Śaṅkara, viewed meditation as the main purpose of Upaniṣadic teaching (see Nakamura, *History*, 519)—Śaṅkara devotes considerable attention to meditation in III.3. Vetter, *Studien*, 119–29, has a nice discussion of Śaṅkara's handling of the problematic of affirming the value of meditative practice in the context of the doctrine of instantaneous liberation. See also Clooney's careful analysis of Śaṅkara's exegetical mode of reasoning in III.3 in "Principle of Upasamhāra."

⁹⁵ Shastri, *BSūBh*, 119, lines 2–3: "evam ekam api brahmāpekṣitopādhisambandhaṃ niras-topādhisambandhaṃ copāsyatvena jñeyatvena ca vedānteṣūpadiśyate" (The Upaniṣads speak of the one brahman, on the one hand, as an object to be meditated upon and thus as connected with conditioning factors, and, on the other, as an object to be known, with all conditioning factors cast away).

⁹⁶ Halbfass, *Tradition and Reflection*, 228.

⁹⁷ Nakamura, *History*, 519, 520; see also III.3.5.

⁹⁸ On Śaṅkara's apparent discomfort with the concept of bliss in connection with brahman, see Halbfass, *Tradition and Reflection*, 255; Andrew O. Fort, "Beyond Pleasure: Śaṅkara on Bliss," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 16 (1988): 177; Hacker, "Distinctive Features," 86.

nates in an experience of bliss, the identification of the bliss sheath and the highest self implies a path to brahman motivated by desire. Ultimately, the identification of the bliss sheath and brahman is unacceptable to Śaṅkara because it blurs the distinction between, on the one hand, salvific *jñāna* and, on the other, meditative acts oriented toward desired experiences. Overturning the *uttarapakṣa* allows Śaṅkara to affirm brahman as the transcendent source of bliss, not as a mere experience of bliss.⁹⁹ Thus, Śaṅkara's apologetic interest in constructing the *jñāna/upāsana* dichotomy, by occasioning a repudiation of the identification of the blissful self and brahman, plays a role in lifting the latter out of the realm of human experience and motivation.

The notion that brahman transcends the experience of bliss as its source might seem obvious to a Vedāntin. Why, then, would the pre-Śaṅkara tradition interpret the Taittirīya text in a way that might occasion a serious misunderstanding of the nature of the religious path? And why would Śaṅkara preserve the arguments for this deficient interpretation in his *Bhāṣya*, giving them full rein before finally overturning their conclusion in a kind of commentarial appendix? As indicated above, the answer has to do with the different problematic underlying this earlier line of interpretation, namely, the Vedāntic repudiation of the Sāṃkhya concept of *pradhāna*. The influence of this preoccupation on the earlier reading of Taittirīya II is transparent in I.1.18. The mention of desire (*kāma*) in the Taittirīya text, "He desired (*akāmayata*), 'Let me become many, let me be born,'" excludes the possibility of the bliss sheath being identified with insentient *pradhāna*.¹⁰⁰ The citation of *Brahma-sūtra* I.1.5, *ikṣīter nāśabdam*, immediately after this argument makes it clear that for the early interpreters of the *Brahma-sūtra*, I.1.12–19 stands in continuity with the rejection of *pradhāna* as the world cause in I.1.5. In the context of this concern with rejecting Sāṃkhya teaching, the identification of brahman with the bliss sheath makes perfect sense, for bliss is one of the manifestations of the sentience that the Upaniṣads affirm of the world cause.

Most likely, then, Śaṅkara leaves the earlier reading of Taittirīya II

⁹⁹ Shastri, *BSūBh*, 127, line 16–128, line 1: "na tvānandamayasya brahmatvam asti, priyaśīrastvādibhir hetubhiritvavocāma" (But we have said that the blissful self is not brahman because [brahman] stands at the head of human joys [as their ultimate principle], as well as for other reasons). For an analysis of this notion of brahman as the source of all human experiences of bliss, see Fort, "Beyond Pleasure," 179, 182, and *passim*.

¹⁰⁰ Shastri, *BSūBh*, 124, line 6; *ibid.*, 124, lines 6–8: "kāmayitṛtvānirdeśān nānumānikam api sāmkyaparikalpitam acetanaṃ pradhānam ānandamayatvena kāraṇatvena vāpekṣitavyam" (From the mention of wishfulness [in the Taittirīya text], the insentient *pradhāna*, that inferred entity imagined by the Sāṃkhyas, is not to be relied upon [for an understanding] of either the blissful self or the world cause).

intact in his *Bhāṣya* because he recognizes its effectiveness in refuting the Sāṃkhya teaching. Indeed, there is some danger that the refinements he brings to Vedānta weaken the case against Sāṃkhya if these are taken out of context. To be specific, his relegation of the relational attributes of brahman to the sphere of nescience undermines the implicitly personalistic conception of brahman that the *Brahma-sūtra* had used to assert the sentience of the world cause over the Sāṃkhya principle of insentient *pradhāna*.¹⁰¹ Śaṅkara voices this concern in a passage in II.1.14 that we looked at above. Here a *pūrvapakṣin* wonders whether a preoccupation with absolute unity, in undermining the concepts of the ruler and the ruled, contradicts the teaching of the Lord (*īśvara*) as the world cause.¹⁰² A concern with weakening the case against Sāṃkhya might therefore account for Śaṅkara's curious retention of the personalistic term *īśvara* to refer even to the highest manifestation of brahman (*paraṃ brahma*, *parātmā*).¹⁰³ As Hacker notes, Śaṅkara leaves it up to his later followers to formulate a distinction between *para* brahman and *īśvara*, the latter now regarded as a lower manifestation of the former.¹⁰⁴ A certain skittishness about Advaita being perceived as a lapse into Sāṃkhya would also explain the peculiarity, again noted by Hacker, that Śaṅkara, unlike his later interpreters, studiously avoids language that would suggest *avidyā* is a material cause.¹⁰⁵ Perhaps Śaṅkara is concerned that the conception of *avidyā* as *causa materialis* could be perceived as a return, under a different name, of the Sāṃkhya principle of *pradhāna*; admitting an insentient material cause would effec-

¹⁰¹ For a persuasive argument that the *Brahma-sūtra* regarded brahman as a personal principle, see Nakamura, *History*, 488.

¹⁰² Shastri, *BSūBh*, 381, lines 9–10: “kūṭasthabrahmātmavādina ekatvaikāntiāyād īśitṛīśitavyābhāva īśvarakāraṇapratijñāvirodha iti cet.” See n. 66 above.

¹⁰³ Hacker, “Distinctive Features,” 85–96.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 94. G. A. Jacob had made the same observation earlier in his preface to the *Vedāntasāra of Sadānanda* (Varanasi: Chaukhamba, 1893), vii–ix.

¹⁰⁵ Hacker, “Distinctive Features,” 63–64. When Śaṅkara does find himself speaking of the cosmological product of *avidyā*, namely, name and form (*nāmarūpe*), in a way suggestive of material causality (i.e., as being the seeds of the samsaric world—*saṃsāraprapaṇcabijabhūte*), he is quick to assert the difference between these and the Lord (*īśvara*), thus compromising a bit on the Advaitic *ananayatva* principle. See Shastri, *BSūBh*, 382, lines 2–4: “sarvajñasyeśvarasyātmabhūta ivāvidyākālpite nāmarūpe tattvānyābhyām anirvacanīye . . . tābhyām anyañ sarvajña īśvaraḥ” (Name and form, inexpressible as either “this” or something other than this, and imagined through ignorance, are, as it were [*iva*], the nature of the omniscient Lord). Note that the little particle *iva* (like) here is doing a great deal of theological work: it prevents brahman from collapsing into Sāṃkhya-esque prime matter. Govindānanda's comment makes this function of the *iva* clear (Shastri, *BSūBh*, 382, lines 16–17): “nāmarūpe ced īśvarasyātmabhūte tarhiśvaro jaḍa ityata āha—tābhyāmanya iti” (If name and form were of the nature of the Lord, then the Lord would be inanimate. Therefore, he says, “Different from these two”).

tively allow Sāṃkhya to enter into Vedānta through the back door, as it were.¹⁰⁶

Thus, the refinements Śaṅkara brings to Vedānta risk undoing the apologetic achievement of his predecessors in distinguishing Vedānta from Sāṃkhya. The arguments of the *uttarapakṣa* in I.1.12–18 therefore function to shield the concept of *nirguṇa* brahman from a possible confusion with an insentient world cause. They mark off a reflective space where Śaṅkara can explore the nuances of Vedāntic theology without worrying about maintaining the sharpest possible contrast with Sāṃkhya teachings. Thus, he concludes his prologue to I.1.12–19 with the assurance that the reflections to follow are undertaken in the context of a refutation of an insentient world cause. The ensuing discussion presupposes the results of the *Bhāṣya* up to this point, namely, that the scriptural texts to be discussed have brahman, and not *pradhāna*, as their purport.¹⁰⁷

We can view Advaita's proximity to Sāṃkhya from another angle. If we recall Edgerton's thesis that a commitment to the path of pure knowledge and a concomitant renunciation of all activity were the defining characteristics of early Sāṃkhya, then we can perhaps regard Śaṅkara's rejection of the *jñānakarmasamuccaya* doctrine as a return of sorts to the Sāṃkhya position. That Śaṅkara's Advaita was perceived in this way is indicated by Bhāskara, whose commentary on the Gita contains several passages that associate Śaṅkara's teaching regarding the total abandonment of ritual activities with the Sāṃkhya school.¹⁰⁸ If, as suggested above, an uncompromising commitment to Vedic authority distinguished early Vedānta from the rationalistic Sāṃkhya school, then perhaps the *jñānakarmasamuccaya* doctrine, or an early version thereof,

¹⁰⁶ For many adherents of Puranic Sāṃkhya (among others), *avidyā* was a name for prime matter (Hacker, "Distinctive Features," 84). See Rao, "Two Myths in Advaita," 271–72, who interprets the Śaṅkara school's doctrine of *māyā*, since it posits an insentient principle as the world cause, as a kind of backslide into Sāṃkhya.

¹⁰⁷ Shastri, *BSūBh*, 119, lines 2–3: "yacca 'gatisāmānyāt' ityacetanakāraṇanirākaraṇam uktam tadapi vākyāntarāṇi brahmaviśayāṇi brahmaviparītakāraṇaṇiśedhena prapancate" (The refutation of an insentient world cause in *Brahma-sūtra* I.1.10 above is here elaborated upon. This is done by rejecting any candidate for world cause opposed to brahman, while at the same time explaining other [Upaniṣadic] statements that have brahman as their object).

¹⁰⁸ See the texts cited in V. Raghavan, "Bhāskara's Gītabhāṣya," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens und Archiv für Indische Philosophie* 12–13 (1968–69): 286: "sarva-karma-tyāginām sāmṃkhyānām jñānād eva kevalād niśśreyasaprāptir uktā" (Those Sāṃkhyas, who abandon all works, say that final beatitude is attained from knowledge alone); *ibid.*, 287: "yathā idam eva sāmṃkhyadarśanam āśrītya sarvadharmā-tyāgam ekavaiṇavino vadanti" (Having committed themselves to the Sāṃkhya philosophy, those [renunciants] of the single-staff speak of abandoning all rites [dharma]). The significance of these Sāṃkhya references is noted by Olivelle, *Renunciation in Hinduism*, 52.

functioned as a key factor in differentiating the two schools. This situation would reflect an early phase when the two Mīmāṃsās existed in a reasonably harmonious and complementary relationship.¹⁰⁹ As the Advaita school distanced itself from the ritual orientation of the Mīmāṃsā, however, it moved—inadvertently!—closer to the older Sāṃkhya position.¹¹⁰ That this was allowed to happen may be taken as an indication that Sāṃkhya's influence was on the wane during the emergence of the Advaita school. As mentioned above, the anti-Sāṃkhya sections of the *Bhāṣya* may have been simply holdovers from an earlier stage in the evolution of the Vedānta tradition. They would be similar in this respect to Śaṅkara's refutation, in II.2.18–27, of Buddhist realism (Sarvāstitivāda), which, as Ingalls notes, had been dead in India centuries prior to the time of Śaṅkara.¹¹¹

CONCLUDING REMARKS

A reading of the *Brahma-sūtra-Bhāṣya* that insists on its irreducibly “polyphonic” nature has the advantage of distancing Śaṅkara from two closely related notions that have formed the basis of many an invidious and essentializing contrast between Advaita, assumed to epitomize the religious thought of India, and the philosophical and religious thought of the West. The first of these is the illusory nature of the phenomenal world, a presupposition of the alleged quietism and ethical indifference of the Brahmin sage.¹¹² The second is the understanding of brahman as an inert and pallid abstraction, an “abstract unity without determination,” as Hegel puts it.¹¹³

Against the first characterization of Advaita teaching, the recognition of the double-voiced character of Śaṅkara's interpretation of the *anāyatvam* sutra (II.1.14)—that is, as internally constituted by the realist

¹⁰⁹ On the early kinship between the two schools, see, e.g., Nakamura, *History*, 409–13.

¹¹⁰ The emergence of the Advaita interpretation of the Vedānta and the concomitant antagonism toward Pūrva-mīmāṃsā teachings predated Śaṅkara. Already Kumārila, who writes before Śaṅkara, refers to pre-Śaṅkara forms of nondualist Vedānta (Nakamura, *History*, 339–40).

¹¹¹ Ingalls, “Śaṅkara's Arguments,” 299.

¹¹² On the Western tendency to depict the essence of Hinduism, as epitomized in the thought of Śaṅkara, as a world-negating, illusionary pantheism, see Ronald Inden's *Imagining India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 101–8. A classic example of the dichotomization of an ethical, life-affirming Christianity and a quietistic, life-denying Hinduism is Albert Schweitzer's *Indian Thought and Its Development*, trans. C. E. B. Russell (Boston: Beacon, 1956).

¹¹³ As quoted in Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1988), 89. The contrast between the dynamic, living God of Christianity and the abstract and inert Absolute of Vedānta is a prominent theme in Rudolf Otto's classic comparison between Eckhart and Śaṅkara, *Mysticism East and West*, trans. Bertha L. Bracey and Richenda C. Payne (New York: Collier, 1962), 187–98 and *passim*.

cosmological discourse that it subverts—suggests that the interpretation of the *Bhāṣya*'s teaching in terms of the illusionist doctrine of *māyāvāda* is reductionistic. Moreover, well-intentioned attempts to dissociate Śaṅkara from *māyāvāda* that presume a monological conception of the *Bhāṣya*'s discourse, attempts such as that of Srinivasa Rao mentioned above, end up effectively conceding the claim they set out to deny; their affirmation of the reality of the world typically appeals to a denial of substantial change, a claim that implicitly relegates changing, finite existences to the realm of the unreal.¹¹⁴ As for the static and abstract conception of brahman, this notion can be seen as the result of the later tradition's attempt to impose a rigid, categorical distinction between the concepts of *īśvara* and the highest (*param*) brahman. This effort to systematize Śaṅkara's somewhat inconsistent, fluid, and intuitive use of the term *īśvara* with respect to the various expressions for brahman effectively pulls apart the dialectical interplay between the personalistic and impersonalistic aspects of brahman in the *Brahma-sūtra-Bhāṣya*. What Hacker characterizes as an "illogical" combination of intuitive theism and intellectual monism can perhaps be better understood as an instance of what Michael Sells, in a discussion of apophatic language in the West, calls "a discourse of double propositions."¹¹⁵ A reading of the *Brahma-sūtra-Bhāṣya* that appreciates the creative interplay among this text's multiple voices preserves the vitality and intensity of the *Bhāṣya*'s discourse on brahman, a liveliness of expression that we may assume more accurately reflects Śaṅkara's religious vision.

¹¹⁴ See n. 77 above. For an argument similar to Rao's, see D. M. Datta, "Some Realistic Aspects of the Philosophy of Śaṅkara," in *Recent Indian Philosophy*, ed. Kalidas Bhattacharya (Calcutta: Progressive, 1963); concerning the denial of substantial change, see esp. 347, 349. Note that Hegel's critique of the concept of *māyā* easily accommodates an acknowledgment of the substantial identity between the world and the absolute. The presence of the divine being in all finite things still "does not secure them in their finite individuality, nor is the finite a real factor in or for the infinite. On the contrary, the abstract self-identity of the finite existences, which identifies them with the abstract absolute, is incompatible with their concrete individual identity" (Halbfass, *India and Europe*, 90).

¹¹⁵ Hacker, "Distinctive Features," 95 and passim; Michael A. Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsayings* (Chicago, 1994), 1–13, esp. 12. Note that Hacker acknowledges that Śaṅkara's discourse on brahman is all the more alive (*lebendiger*) for its terminological imprecision ("Distinctive Features," 95).

Kant and the “Distinctively Moral Ought”: A Platonic-Augustinian Defense, against MacIntyre*

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Love God above all, and your neighbor as yourself. (The supreme evangelical commandment, according to Kant.)

Love yourself above all, but God and your neighbor for your own sake. (The supreme principle of eudaemonism, according to Kant.)¹

I. INTRODUCTION

In her influential article “Modern Moral Philosophy,” Elizabeth Anscombe rejects uses of a distinctively moral idea of obligation as amounting to “derivatives from survivals” of an older divine command theory of ethics. Since few modern ethicists are theists, she advocates a return to the far more ordinary use of “ought” to be found in Aristotle (and Plato)—the everyday one by which a man just shouldn’t spoil his life in its essentials through, say, sloth or injustice.² Alasdair MacIntyre has earned his place in our current philosophical canon largely by arguing

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¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (CPR), trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor, in *Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5:83 and 83n (pagination for Kant’s works follows the standard Akademie Ausgabe); cf. Luke 10:27, Deut. 6:5, Lev. 19:18.

² See Elizabeth Anscombe, “Modern Moral Philosophy,” in *Virtue Ethics*, ed. Roger Crisp and Michael Slote (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), esp. 26, 33, 43. Her historical thesis regarding Aristotle—that he lacks moral categories such as moral rightness, moral wrongness, and moral duty—has been partially challenged by Nicholas White in *Individual and Conflict in Greek Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 108–20, but then defended with unprecedented thoroughness by Richard Kraut in “Doing without Morality: Reflections on the Meaning of *Dein* in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 30 (2006): 159–200.

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Anscombe's thesis of the ungrounded character of modern ethics in his iconoclastic *After Virtue*. But it is especially later—and after his conversion to Christianity and Thomism—that he invokes Anscombe's phrase and launches a critique of the “distinctively moral.” In *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* it is said to be John Duns Scotus whose divine command theory rejects the idea of the natural law as directed to our good. In the latter's place, Scotus posits a division of the self between self-regarding and other-regarding inclinations, and alongside his enfeebled ought of practical reasoning there appears “another ‘ought,’ one unknown to Aristotle and to the ancient world generally, the distinctive ‘ought’ of moral obligation.”³ As the account goes, it was this move that led to the voluntarism and irrationalism of Ockham, and from there to Kant and his successors, who disparage happiness, virtue, and natural sociability in favor of deontology—“unintelligible residues” of Ockhamist divine command theories.⁴

MacIntyre's alternative to this program is the plain, everyday, eudaemonistic ought of the Aristotelian. In this schema, rational human agency is structured as a practical syllogism: the major premise is that the agent should do what is good for or needed by her, the minor premise perceives some particular object as such a good, and the corresponding action results.⁵ What may be most impressive, though, is the tremendous progress MacIntyre has made in developing and clarifying the manners in which this eudaemonistic foundation can support the profound human conviction that virtuous behavior and affectionate dedication to others should be performed for their own sake.⁶ This is basically because it is the teleological structure of the person to pursue her own good, the attainment of which is only possible through noninstrumental dedication to the virtues and to a generous communal life;⁷ the corresponding transformations of desire and in-

³ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 155.

⁴ Compare MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, 28, 163, 178, 193–94, Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 44–45, 111, 149, and *Dependent Rational Animals* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999), 122.

⁵ For the fuller complexity, see MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 161–62, Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 138–41, 125–30, *Three Rival Versions*, 154, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 70, and, on the foundational question “What is my ultimate good?” Alasdair MacIntyre, “Plain Persons and Moral Philosophy: Rules, Virtues, and Goods,” in *The MacIntyre Reader*, ed. Kelvin Knight (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 136–52, 150–51.

⁶ A just person performs an act because it is just (MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?* 113). Aristotelians standardly defend this view while distinguishing it from Kant's (e.g., Sarah Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1991], 111, 94).

⁷ See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 52, 150, *Three Rival Versions*, 138–39.

clination harmonize the search for one's own good with *the* good⁸ and the common good.⁹ She thus performs each virtuous action for its own sake and as a means to the further end of happiness,¹⁰ often regardless of its consequences in a particular case.¹¹ Thus Aristotelian practical reason avoids a merely instrumental view of reason, an arbitrary concept of choice among ultimate ends, and the characteristically modern egoism-altruism dichotomy.¹²

My own basic identification with the Platonic and Augustinian ethical traditions makes me highly sympathetic to MacIntyre's project (unlike so many of his critics). I do not at all doubt that harmonizing self-interested desires with virtue and common goods is central to the morally and experientially good life. However, I do challenge the common neo-Aristotelian claim that this is the entire foundational story of ethics. I thus maintain that in one respect MacIntyre (like Anscombe

⁸ For Aristotle, it is the good and the best alone that provides a fully rational *archē* for human action; for Aquinas, the true end of human nature is nothing less than perfect happiness (MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?* 89, 192). As contrasted with utilitarianism, Aristotle is said to defend "a single, albeit perhaps complex, supreme good" (133).

⁹ See MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 88.

¹⁰ For Aristotle, the good man values the fine, noble, or just act "for its own sake as well as for its part in constituting *eudaimonia*" (MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?* 108). Vindicating this end-and-means reconciliation is basic to contemporary defenders of Aristotle, as in T. H. Irwin's remark that virtuous people choose virtuous action "for its own sake because it is a part of their happiness" ("Theory and Common Sense in Greek Philosophy," in *How Should One Live? Essays on the Virtues*, ed. Roger Crisp [Oxford: Clarendon, 1996], 51); cf. Jan Szaif, "Aristotle on the Benefits of Virtue (*Nicomachean Ethics* 10.7 and 9.8)," in *The Virtuous Life in Greek Ethics*, ed. Burkhard Reis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 170–71; and, on Plato, see Christopher Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), esp. 582 n. 163. Aristotle's controversial claim that practical deliberation is concerned only with means, not ends, is thus interpreted to mean that one can deliberate about particular ends but that these are means (as well as constitutive parts) of the final end; cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE) 3.3, 1112b33–35; MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 106, *Whose Justice?* 132, "Plain Persons and Moral Philosophy," 139. All Aristotle references follow *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

¹¹ See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 49, 205, esp. 150, 185, 198, 273, and *Whose Justice?* 113: "To say that just actions are to be pursued for their own sake is to say, not that nothing can outweigh the requirements of justice, but that the whole notion of weighing the requirements of justice against something else is from the standpoint of the virtuous a mistake. . . . That being just is taken to be a condition of achieving any good at all and that being just requires caring about and valuing being just, even if it were to lead to no further good." Note also in this context MacIntyre's depiction (*After Virtue*, 184, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 66–67) of practices with goods internal to them; cf. Charles Taylor, "Justice after Virtue," 25; Janet Coleman, "MacIntyre and Aquinas," 80–81, both in *After MacIntyre*, ed. J. Horton and S. Mendus (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).

¹² On instrumental reason, see MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 53–54, *Whose Justice?* 88, 285, and *Three Rival Versions*, 97. The egoism-altruism dichotomy is discussed below (sec. II.C).

et al.) has overstated his case regarding duty and "the moral *ought*."¹³ This essay begins by drawing broadly from Plato and Augustine and two thinkers insightfully developing some of their fundamental principles—Anselm (1033–1109) and Scotus (1265–1308)—in order to present a sympathetic genealogy of the moral ought as rooted in an ideal eager and able to accommodate this-worldly happiness, but increasingly aware of happiness's limitations in the justification of some fundamental virtuous behavior. The second section argues that, whatever significant (and in my view questionable) departures from premodern thought Kant may have embraced, a close reading of his ethical writings shows him to be developing these Platonic-Augustinian concerns in a sophisticated and balanced manner.¹⁴ I then outline Kant's model of practical reasoning with special reference to its theory of virtue and its attempt to ground and justify costly moral dedication, along with Platonic-Augustinian parallels. Finally, after presenting MacIntyre's striking account of "self-sacrifice" as a vice, I argue that the picture of moral agency and duty fully developed in Anselm, Scotus, and Kant offers a more rationally and phenomenologically plausible account of paradigmatically virtuous behavior—that is, that which is done for its own sake under difficult circumstances—than the eudaemonistic foundations of MacIntyre and his predecessors. Attempting to offer suggestive (rather than conclusive) challenges and alternatives to a justly distinguished ethical paradigm, this essay attempts to keep its main text at a manageable length through extensive footnoting and cross-refer-

¹³ Bernard Williams also alleges an unfortunateness in the "very special notion of obligation in modern 'morality'" (*Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985], 32, and see also 174–96). For Philippa Foot's challenge of categorical imperatives, see D. Z. Phillips, "In Search of the Moral 'Must': Mrs. Foot's Fugitive Thought," *Philosophical Quarterly* 27, no. 107 (1977): 140–57. A prominent dissenter from this view has been Julia Annas ("Prudence and Morality in Ancient and Modern Ethics," *Ethics* 105, no. 2 [1995]: 252 n. 20), who maintains that in Aristotle, for instance, the *kalon* "marks a distinct moral perspective that cannot be fully accounted for on the traditional view."

¹⁴ Among other departures to be noted below (see, e.g., nn. 35, 40, and 48), I think of the subversive impetus of Kant's emphasis on autonomy; see the comments of the broadly Kantian Vittorio Hösle (*Morals and Politics*, trans. Steven Rendall [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004], 50, 100–101). From a Platonic point of view, debunking customary moral assumptions without replacing them with substantive and justified ones—something relatively few individuals may be capable of doing—leaves human nature by default with a crude, self-flattering sensualism; see Augustine, *City of God*, trans. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 14.2, 582 (for all Augustine *City of God* citations, page numbers refer to this edition); and Plato *Republic* 7.538d–e; cf. Plato *Laws* 3.695b, 7.793e, *Gorgias* 463b, 527b–c. Unless otherwise noted, Plato references follow *The Complete Works of Plato*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

ences, aiding readers to pursue further whichever issues are of interest to them.

II. TRANSCENDING THE SELF-INTERESTED SYLLOGISM

To a remarkable extent, philosophers with substantial premodern or antimodern moral commitments have been led and preeminently represented by Aristotelians, including Thomists. Accordingly, Aristotelians have been highly influential in shaping a prevailing understanding of the history of ethics. But those who believe that Aristotle often discards, or assumes with minimal exploration, themes central to Plato—concerning psychology, justice, love, happiness, or the practical implications of metaphysics—might hope for an alternative history of ethics in which the essential contrasts of the premodern with the modern might be framed subtly differently. The Aristotelian historical account is quite compelling if we must either retain solely eudaemonistic foundations or be left with stifling duties, neglected virtues, or arbitrary wills. We shall begin by tracing the various characteristically Platonic alternatives to this dichotomy, in which phenomenological insights such as behaving rightly for its own sake are reasonably developed, while attempts to root them eudaemonistically are shown to be less promising and hence subordinated—but far from neglected or discarded.

A. *The Road to Rectitude: Plato to Scotus*

In the *Protagoras*, Plato's Socrates seems to be at the heights of anti-Kantianism, attempting to justify morality entirely through a pleasure-pain calculus. However, it is far from obvious that this should be taken at face value,¹⁵ as Aristotle and many other commentators have assumed.¹⁶ Attributing some form of eudaemonism to Plato seems necessary nonetheless, in that he thought a rational vindication of justice requires a full-scale investigation of the effects of noble and shameful acts on one's psychic health, arguing toward a moral and spiritual view of the self and the universe in which indulgence and social contempt

¹⁵ See Daniel Russell (epilogue to *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life* [Oxford: Clarendon, 2005]) for a persuasive case that the *Protagoras* presents no reasons to construe Socrates or Plato as a hedonist of any kind. Gregory Vlastos (*Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991], 205) also denies that Socrates was a hedonist; cf. John M. Rist, *The Mind of Aristotle* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 51.

¹⁶ See Aristotle's treatment of *akrasia* (*NE* 7.1–10, esp. 1145b21–29).

are bound to fail even on the egoist's own grounds.¹⁷ And though he recognized that the world's severe injustices may require appeal to an afterlife to show that the just do flourish,¹⁸ it is also clear that he, without hesitation or qualification, championed the rigorous moral life as that which is ultimately the most rewarding and never seemed to abandon eudaemonism.¹⁹ In all of this Plato seems genuinely non-Kantian.

Nonetheless, we have strong reasons to believe that the Platonic idea of morality is not entirely grounded in self-interested calculation and shows noteworthy parallels to Kant. Socrates advises us to give no "countervailing weight" in decision making to any considerations but justice and goodness,²⁰ and he persevered in this amid a near-limit case of worldly hardship not because an afterlife would surely bring more benefits but because believing in this possibility is a "noble risk."²¹ Across his career Plato showed this dedication to a distinctive and rad-

¹⁷ The peak of this argument is Plato *Republic* 8–9. For Plato's case against the tyrannical way of life, see John M. Rist, "Plotinus and Moral Obligation," in *Platonism and Its Christian Heritage* (London: Variorum, 1985), 227–28, "Democracy and Religious Values: Augustine on Locke, Lying and Individualism," *Augustinian Studies* 29 (1998): 22, *Real Ethics: Rethinking the Foundations of Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 74, 117, 212. For the broader moral and spiritual context, see Plato *Laws* 6.770c–e; Rist, *Real Ethics*, 214; Annas, "Prudence and Morality," 246. Plato's negative psychological case is accepted even by Epicureans (Lucretius *De rerum natura* 6.1–28; cf. Plato *Gorgias* 493a) and in general seems stronger than his positive project, namely, that enjoyment in this life is proportioned to one's justice.

¹⁸ And so in perhaps his three greatest ethical dialogues—*Phaedo*, *Gorgias*, *Republic*—Plato concludes with eschatological myths, where an afterlife reveals the natural consequences of virtue and vice unambiguously, and the injustices of this world are turned on their head (*Laws* 10 repeats and extends this approach). Plato's general awareness of the unhappiness that results from serious misfortune is apparent even during his vindication of justice's rewards (see *Republic* 10.613a). On this aspect of Platonic providence, see E. de Strycker and S. R. Slings, *Plato's Apology of Socrates* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 232–35.

¹⁹ See the strong affirmations of the importance of eudaemonism in moral education in Plato *Laws* 2.662b–63b (cf. 663d–e). Unfortunately, White does not seem to take this passage into account in his denial that Plato is a thoroughgoing eudaemonist (*Individual and Conflict*, chap. 2, esp. 182–85, but see, rightly, 166–73 on how Thrasymachus's attacks presuppose that eudaemonism is not universally assumed in Greek culture).

²⁰ Plato *Apology* 28b: "Man, you don't speak well, if you believe that a man worth anything at all would give countervailing weight to danger of life or death, or give consideration to anything but this when he acts: whether his action is just or unjust, the action of a good or of an evil man" (in Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, 209). Compare Plato *Crito* 48c–d with Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, 210–14.

²¹ Plato *Phaedo* 114d: "No sensible man would insist that these things are as I have described them, but I think it is fitting for a man to risk the belief—for the risk is a noble one—that this, or something like this, is true about our souls and their dwelling places." Compare *Phaedo* 91ab and *Meno* 86bc with *Philebus* 16cd, 28c–30d, and *Laws* 5.727d. The parallel to Kant's idea of the supreme good is evident—see *CPR* 5:143; Robert Adams, "Introduction" to Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, trans. A. Wood and G. di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), xxv–xxvi; and John Hare, *The Moral Gap: Kantian Ethics, Human Limits, and God's Assistance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), chap. 3.

ically prioritized moral good, which was perhaps seen as sufficient for happiness, and this was adopted in their own ways by the Stoics and Kant.²² Plato forwarded the “inspired lover” as his model of goodness, demonstrating that when we are in love with someone there is a sense in which we desire him, but for any “high-grade” Platonic eros this manifests itself unselfishly;²³ only debased forms of eros are merely prudential.²⁴ A just soul takes in the abundance of beauty and reflects it back in a generosity that seeks to make the beloved better for his own sake.²⁵ And, just as one who says he is in love but is willing to

²² See Plato *Apology* 30ab, *Republic* 505a, *Laws* 1.631bc, 2.661d; cf. *Euthydemus* 281d. For the Stoics, see *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, vol. 1, ed. A. A. Long and D. Sedley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), chaps. 58 and 60, esp. the entry for Diogenes Laertius 7.101–3 at 58a. Julia Annas maintains that these Stoicizing passages are fully reconciled with the idea that happiness is what we seek in all we do (“Virtue and Eudaimonism,” *Social Philosophy and Policy* 15 [1998]: 42, 46), which may imply that virtuous action is seen as sufficient for happiness (cf. Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, 217; contrast de Strycker and Slings, *Plato’s Apology of Socrates*, 130 n. 9). Annas also claims this sharp distinction between virtue and all other kinds of goods “is never developed into an account of two sorts of reasoning, of the kind we find in the Stoics” and that its status in Plato is puzzling (Julia Annas, “Aristotle and Kant on Morality and Practical Reasoning,” in *Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics: Rethinking Happiness and Duty*, ed. Stephen Engstrom and Jennifer Whiting [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], 240). For Kant, see his treatment of the “good will,” as well as *CPR* 5:60, and “Idea for a Universal History” (I) 8:26: “All good that is not grafted onto a morally-good character is nothing but illusion and glistering misery” (in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, trans. Ted Humphrey [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983]).

²³ John Rist (*Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 153) centrally explores the “ethics of inspiration”: “In Platonic and Platonically inspired ethics the Greek word *kalon* . . . means ‘inspiring’ and hence ‘compelling.’ . . . In Augustine’s time no moralist would have supposed that his choices were limited to something like utilitarianism (or, more broadly, consequentialism), Kantian obligations or a form of contract-theory. Even the original ancient versions of what is now called virtue-ethics were far from an ethic of good training inducing good habits. Aristotelians [and even Stoics], as well as Platonists, dealt in the ethics of inspiration.” On Diotima and *Republic* 7, see Rist, *Augustine*, 152, John Rist, “Plato Says That We Have Tripartite Souls,” in *Man, Soul, and Body: Essays in Ancient Thought from Plato to Dionysius* (London: Variorum, 1996), 122–23, *Human Value: A Study in Ancient Philosophical Ethics* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 50–51; see also Plato *Phaedrus* 256b, 256e–57a.

²⁴ See John Rist, “Moral Motivation in Plato, Plotinus, Augustine, and Ourselves,” in *Plato and Platonism*, ed. J. M. Van Ophuijsen (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 264, *Real Ethics*, 92 n. 32, 108–9. Bobonich extensively discusses Plato’s vindication of the genuine value and eudaemonistic grounding of “other-regarding concern” for its own sake through “the appeal to friendship between citizens as such in a good city, the theological appeal of the god’s efforts at bringing order to the universe, and the direct appeal to the value of virtue” (*Plato’s Utopia Recast*, 434; see also secs. 5.6 and 5.8). Charles Kahn objects that “other-regarding” is anachronistic but endorses Bobonich’s analysis “within the limits of the city” (“From *Republic* to *Laws*: A Discussion of Christopher Bobonich, *Plato’s Utopia Recast*,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 26 [2004]: 342).

²⁵ See Rist, “Moral Motivation,” 268; *Real Ethics*, 34, *Augustine*, 174; A. H. Armstrong, “Platonic Eros and Christian Agape,” *The Downside Review* 255 (1961): 118; Plato *Phaedrus* 244a–57b. See also the Platonic, analytic ethics of Robert Adams (*Finite and Infinite Goods: A Framework for Ethics* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999], chap. 5 on Eros, esp. 140).

make no sacrifices on the beloved's behalf can well be said to be a liar, one who has been inspired by the Good itself would never refuse a just obligation to return to the "cave" of public life and moral service, even though they are not in themselves fine things.²⁶ And it is these norms that ground whatever true moral beliefs exist among common people, even if they do not have the knowledge-*cum*-experience of the higher realities that would eudaemonistically vindicate such duties.²⁷ The Platonic focus upon the love for various ends instantiated in different ways of life, as well as the various sources of moral norms, suggests different avenues for reflection than the Aristotelian focus on proper habits and virtues serving as means to the single end of happiness.²⁸ And despite Plato's apparently consistent view that philosophy must give eudaemonistic vindication for such norms due to the centrality of self-interested motivation, his multifaceted approach to ethics gave rise to secondary noneudaemonistic appeals, such as condemning self-excepting self-interest as the source of all evil,²⁹ and insisting that the self was made first for the sake of the universe, not vice versa.³⁰

²⁶ See Plato *Republic* 519c-21a, Letter 7 334e-35b; Rist "Plato Says," 123, *Augustine*, 153; and the more controversial specification of this thesis by White (*Individual and Conflict*, 202-8), maintaining that, in this one very particular situation, the philosophically trained indeed sacrifice their self-interest in giving up their best potential life.

²⁷ On the moral "true belief" of common people, see Rist, *Real Ethics*, 36-37. For the identification of the One and the Good in the later Plato, see Rist, *Mind of Aristotle*, 196-202. For some key statements of divine standards besides the doctrine of the Forms, see Plato *Theaetetus* 176e-77a, *Timaeus* 29e, *Laws* 4.716cd, 10.906a-b; cf. *Laws* 10.890d, 10.892b, *Republic* 6.501b. The once-neglected theme of the ideal of godlikeness in Plato has now received serious scholarly attention (see David Sedley, "The Ideal of Godlikeness," in *Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul*, ed. Gail Fine [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999], 309-28). For a correction of Sedley showing that the ideal is moral and not merely intellectual, see Timothy Mahoney, "Moral Virtue and Assimilation to God in Plato's *Timaeus*," *Oxford Studies in Classical Philosophy* 28 (2005): 77-91; see also n. 31 below. More generally, see Vlastos (*Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, 176-77) on how Socrates' disinterestedly benevolent god "brings a release from that form of egocentricity which is endemic in Socratic eudaemonism, as in all eudaemonism." On Plotinus, see Rist, "Plotinus and Moral Obligation," 229, and John Rist, "Plotinus and Christian Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Lloyd Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 390.

²⁸ For the various kinds of reason and soul battling within each person, see Rist, *Real Ethics*, chaps. 3-4, and "Plato Says," esp. 111-12; on Augustine, see John Rist, "Faith and Reason," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 26. Aristotle's failure to focus on moral ends is related to his neglect of Platonic eros: see Rist, *Real Ethics*, 86-87, and n. 119 below.

²⁹ See Plato *Laws* 5.731d-32b.

³⁰ Compare Plato *Laws* 10.903c, with Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (A), trans. V. L. Dowdell, rev. H. H. Rudnick (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 7:130: "Egoism can only be contrasted with pluralism, which is a frame of mind in which the self, instead of being enwrapped in itself as if it were the whole world, understands and behaves as a mere citizen of the world." Similar pluralism is attained in Stoicism through belief in providential order combined with the realization that nature's general pattern shows no special concern for my individual survival (Michael Frede, "On the Stoic Conception of

It is in this Platonic spirit that classicist and moral philosopher John M. Rist offers his own ethical theory, which might be dubbed "meta-physical background eudaemonism": That doing what we ought to corresponds with our advantage, even though we are not to do it merely or foundationally because it is to our advantage; that we are obligated to pursue virtue for its own preeminent sake even while we recognize its ultimate utility; and that knowledge of the Good, itself the highest enjoyment, reveals irreducible obligations.³¹ From this perspective, Plato had no allergy to a "distinctively moral *ought*"—much less was it "unknown" to his ancient world. Rather, he acknowledged and embraced it as practically embodied in both everyday and highly developed moral life but saw it as needing vindication in the face of "the determined subverter of morality."³² And precisely because of his abiding concern with such interlocutors, he developed ideals of self, justice, love, and cosmos central to thinkers who would question eudaemonistic harmony in different and more fundamental ways than he himself did.

Thus, while Augustine consistently affirmed with his pagan philosophical predecessors that all humans obviously seek happiness, at the same time he considerably problematized self-love and the search for happiness, potentially leaving other-directed love as a more compelling legacy than his eudaemonistic heritage.³³ Taking Augustine's negative contribution first, we find a thoroughgoing critique of all previous philosophical attempts at finding one's highest good of happiness in this

the Good," in *Topics in Stoic Philosophy*, ed. Katerina Ierodiakonou [Oxford: Clarendon, 1999], esp. 80).

³¹ See Rist, *Real Ethics*, 44, 92–93, 97, 170–74, 211–15, 262, 275. He writes that in Greek eudaemonism "it 'pays' to be moral, not in any crudely materialist sense but in that one will become a better, more complete, more unified person, . . . 'happier,' by living a 'moral' life. Though Plato would see no reason *against* wanting to become better and indeed many reasons why one should so want, in taking that view he, in particular . . . is not urging us to be good *because* it pays to be good, whether in this world or in another—though as a matter of fact it does—but because we are made to conform ourselves to the goodness of the gods" (123). For the ideal of godlikeness in various Greek eudaemonists, see n. 27 above; Rist, "Plato Says," 121, *Mind of Aristotle*, 52, John Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 267 n. 2, and "Plotinus and Moral Obligation," 224. Kant may consider Rist's Platonism perfectionist rather than eudaemonist (see *Metaphysics of Morals* [MM] 6: 387–88, in Gregor, *Practical Philosophy*), but it also pursues a broadly eudaemonist justificational supplement.

³² See Rist, *Real Ethics*, 37; White, *Individual and Conflict*, 166–73. Rist does oppose Kant's version of the moral "ought" if seen as separated from a hidden Christian metaphysics (*Real Ethics*, 163–77), but he clearly maintains that Platonic obligation is moral in a manner not reducible to enlightened self-interest (e.g., 35, 143, 259).

³³ See, e.g., Augustine, *De beata vita*, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 10.21.31, *City of God* 4.23, 169, 171, 4.25, 174, 10.1, 930, 19.1, 912–13, *De Trinitate*, trans. Edmund Hill (New York: New City, 1991), 13.6, 347, 13.11, 352. Compare Oliver O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 148.

world—a criticism mounted most famously in *De civitate Dei* 19.1–20 but perhaps even more powerfully in *De Trinitate* 13.³⁴ The crux of the argument is that, given the hardships and vicissitudes of this life, such an idea of the foundations of ethics inevitably leads to a hardened retreat from emotional connection and/or to an undue limitation of the scope of moral concern.³⁵ The second element of his negative contribution—repeated and extended by Kant—is a strong sense of “moral suffering”:³⁶ that there are sufferings peculiar to the righteous, not the least of which being the strife of moral self-division that will never be fully overcome (as it seems to be, for instance, in Aristotle’s man of temperance)³⁷ as well as the duties rightly but painfully placed upon us by membership in a broken social world.³⁸

³⁴ In *De Trinitate* 13.8, 349, Augustine concludes: “Thus no one is happy but the man who has everything he wants, and wants nothing wrongly” (cf. *Confessions* 10.28.39, and *De moribus ecclesiae Catholicae* 1.3.4). Kant affirms something like the second condition in I 8:26 (see n. 22 above); as for the first, he makes one condition of happiness “That *everything* should *always* go the way you would like it to” (*MM* 6:480; cf. *CPR* 5:124, 137; Plato *Laws* 3.687c). Kant explicitly departs from the Stoics because they fail to make happiness in this sense an independent object of aspiration, reducing happiness to consciousness of rectitude—although “in this they could have been sufficiently refuted by the voice of their own nature” (*CPR* 5:127); cf. Augustine: “True virtues are not such liars” as to claim that they can protect their bearers “against suffering any miseries” (*City of God* 19.4, 924). With this move both Augustine and Kant reject what Rist dubs the “ascetic ploy” (see Rist, *Augustine*, 49–52, *Plotinus*, 145–46; cf. Augustine *De Trinitate* 13.11, 351).

³⁵ This is the Stoic error: see *City of God* 9.4–5, 14.5–9, 19.4. Emotional connection is painful, so the Stoic seeks to combine faithful dedication with a self-protective emotional disengagement (see Rist, “Faith and Reason,” 35). The Augustinian would say that, in his championing of “moral apathy” (*MM* 6:408–9, *A* 7:252–54), Kant at least comes dangerously close to this Stoic error and that this is predictable, since, although he avoided the philosophical vanity of attaining happiness here and now, he does insist on the need to fulfill moral duties by human efforts alone, without essential connection to the divine abundance as a source of moral generosity (cf. Augustine *City of God* 19.4, 919, and n. 40 below for Kant’s religious views, with Hare, *Moral Gap*, 86). But what is perhaps more striking is the extent to which at least the early Augustine was overinfluenced by these Stoic ideals even after his conversion—see *Confessions* 4.4–11 and 9.12, with the profound reply of C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1988), 120–21.

³⁶ See esp. Augustine *City of God* 22.22–23; see also 19.4, 920, 19.14–16, and, for uncharacteristically dour remarks, 21.14–15. Contrast the more optimistic *Confessions* 13.12.30, 9.1.1, 10.36.59–37.61.

³⁷ According to Bonnie Kent, “in Aristotle’s ethics, internal division is a condition human beings can and should overcome” (*Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century* [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1995], 204). Aristotle sees continence and incontinence as rare halfway houses en route to temperance or intemperance. In the end all become good men or bad man, and the bad man is irrevocably bad, unable to choose the good except incidentally, just as the good man cannot intentionally choose a bad act. Kent (*Virtues of the Will*, 225–26, and Bonnie Kent, “Rethinking Moral Dispositions: Scotus on the Virtues,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams [Cambridge University Press, 2003], 352) cites convincingly Aristotle *NE* 1105a23–b3, 1114a11–21, 1128b28–29, 1150a21–22, 1152a29–33, *Categories* 9a2–4; cf. Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle: The Desire to Understand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 168.

³⁸ See esp. Augustine *City of God* 19.5–6; and R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in*

Thus requiring an alternative to the standard eudaemonist project, much in Augustine indicates a simple attempt to shift the source and occasion of attaining happiness from this world to the spiritual world.³⁹ It is in the centrality of love for the divine in human aspiration and motivation that Augustine and Kant most clearly differ;⁴⁰ particularly grotesque to Kant would be the early Augustine's view that all of creation—notoriously including other people—ought to be “used” as a means for the one intrinsic end, the “enjoyment” of God.⁴¹

This pure spiritual self-optimizer framework came to be considerably qualified, however, due to reflections on the need for ultimate and nonutilitarian love for God,⁴² as well as the Christian neighbor-love

the Theology of St. Augustine (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 100: “there is no felicity to be realized among the ‘necessities’ of this social existence.”

³⁹ See, e.g., Augustine *Confessions* 4.12.18, 10.20.29, *City of God* 5.18, 223, 5.24–25, 232–33, 6.9, 260. Compare O'Donovan (*Self-Love in St. Augustine*, 120): Augustine “insisted that self-love must always accompany neighbor-love because almsgiving is worthless unless done for the sake of one's own blessedness.”

⁴⁰ Negatively, Kant sounds a great deal like Augustine at times in speaking of the love of glory and dominance being highly motivating but insufficient for virtue (I 8:26, A 7:327–28, MM 6:284, 306–8, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (R) 6:27, 58n, in *Religion and Rational Theology*, trans. and ed. Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). But positively, Kant has no parallel to Augustine's idea that God is so completely our good that we are necessarily restive without him and will insatiably seize every manner of private goods to make up the difference (see Augustine *Confessions* 1.1, 2.6.4, *City of God* 2.17, 5.12, 7.27, 12.1, 15.4–5, as contrasted with the positive ideal, e.g., 5.16, 15.3–5). For Kant “religion” is “(subjectively considered) the recognition of all our duties as divine commands” (R 6:153–54), and he clearly excludes forms of religious piety such as prayer (see R 6:194). His key reason for this seems peculiarly blind to the distinctly religious needs highlighted by Augustine: “There are no particular duties toward God in a universal religion; for God cannot receive anything from us; we cannot act on him or for him” (R 6:154n; cf. Adams, “Introduction,” x, xxx). For Kant it is the focus on pure moral dispositions and duties, not external religious service, that improves the soul (R 6:124, 159; cf. his ideal of a church as a purely voluntary community formed for mutual ethical support in R 6:94–97). Accordingly, the uniquely effective moral pedagogy represents duty stripped of every incentive: see “On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory, But It Is of No Use in Practice” (TP), in *Practical Philosophy*, 8:286–88, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (G), in *Practical Philosophy*, 4:410–11 with 411n, 426n, CPR 5:79–85, 152–56, MM 6:482–85, and A 7:295; cf. G. Felicitas Munzel (“Kant on Moral Education,” *Review of Metaphysics* 57 [2003]: 59–60, 69) on the disciplinary preparation initially required. Though Kant is quite right in saying that even an eight- or nine-year-old can recognize the admirable character of choosing duty in difficult cases, the Augustinian would find him naive in thinking that entire lifetimes and entire societies could be won over to steady moral aspiration through pep rallies of purity. For a possible link of Kant's religious psychology and his idea of “moral apathy,” see n. 35 above.

⁴¹ See, e.g., Augustine, *Of True Religion*, trans. J. H. S. Burleigh, in *Earlier Writings* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), 47.91, 272, *On Christian Teaching*, trans. R. P. H. Green (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1.22.20. See also O'Donovan, *Self-Love in St. Augustine*, 26–29; cf. n. 46 below.

⁴² Using God for the sake of this-worldly enjoyment or taking this-worldly enjoyment as final without any belief in God frequently become the very definition of evil; see esp. *City of God* 15.7, 644, and also 15.17, 670, 21.26, 1095; contrast the acceptable use at 10.15, 413. The

command.⁴³ Augustine thus came to reflect upon the need to love God more than self⁴⁴ and the need for an overarching theological virtue of charity⁴⁵ enabling love for others "in God" and as they intrinsically merit,⁴⁶ rather than as they might fulfill or advance the self.⁴⁷ Virtues came to be seen as essentially other regarding, such that any act wherein the self-regarding overshadows the other regarding is immoral.⁴⁸ Developing the Platonic emphasis on love rather than happiness as a chief motivation gave rise to a noneudaemonistic strand in his thought, as Rist describes in his magisterial *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*: "He rejects all forms of hedonism, including spiritual hedonism. In and of itself delight would not entice the will to God, nor is the aim of the good man to secure the right sort of delight. Delight is not the final cause of the action of the good man, and to

contrast is between love for "some extrinsic material reward" and that for "the benefits intrinsic to the relationship" (O'Donovan, *Self-Love in St. Augustine*, 127).

⁴³ See O'Donovan, *Self-Love in St. Augustine*, 115–17.

⁴⁴ Augustine's earthly city was formed "by love of self extending even to contempt of God" (*City of God* 14.28, 632, cf. 14.13, 609, 15.1, 634). For the two cities throughout Augustine's writings, see R. W. Dyson, *The Pilgrim City: Social and Political Ideas in the Writings of St. Augustine of Hippo* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), 32–38. This is, of course, in one sense a merely rhetorical point, since true self-love is understood as love of God; but the point of emphasis is nonetheless different and less at home with eudaemonism than the idea of self-love in, say, Aristotle *NE* 9.8. *Amor sui* is consistently used negatively in Augustine's mature thought (Rist, *Augustine*, 190).

⁴⁵ See Herbert Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 83 and 279 n. 23; and Augustine, Letter 155.12–13, in *Political Writings*, ed. E. M. Atkins and R. J. Dodaro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 96.

⁴⁶ Augustine moved away from his earlier "use" formulation, through the view that one should love one's neighbors "because of God" (cf. *De Trinitate* 8.12, 254), and finally to an intrinsic but conditioned love: "enjoyment in God." For the mature position see *City of God* 19.13, 940, *De Trinitate* 9.13, 278; metaphysical inferiors are still supposed to be "used" (see also *City of God* 19.17, 945). For his comprehensive development, see Rist, *Augustine*, 162–66.

⁴⁷ See Augustine *Of True Religion* 46.87, *Confessions* 6.16.26, *De Trinitate* 9.13, 278, *City of God* 11.16, 470; Bonnie Kent, "Augustine's Ethics," in Stump and Kretzman, *Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, 214; Rist, *Augustine*, 148–49.

⁴⁸ See Kent's excellent remarks on virtue as rooted in other-regarding charity and hence incompatible with being motivated chiefly by one's fear or desire for reward, while at the same time God (not virtue) must remain "as the sole good to be loved purely for its own sake and without reference to any higher good" ("Augustine's Ethics," 215). Augustine's Letter 145 states: "He . . . is an enemy to righteousness who refrains from sin only through fear of punishment; but he will become the friend of righteousness if through love of it he avoids sin, for then he will be really afraid of sin. For the person who only fears the flames of hell is afraid not of sinning but of burning" (quoted in Kent, "Augustine's Ethics," 219; cf. Kant, *MM* 6:430, *R* 6:22n). However, Augustine by no means eschews the use of these lesser motivations for spiritual and political purposes (Letter 153.15, in Atkins and Dodaro, *Political Writings*, 90; Rist, *Augustine*, 226, 182 n. 80, 274; similarly Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* [ST], trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province [1920; Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1981], I–II 95.1, 100.9, 107.1 ad 2). In the biblical writers, the fear of the Lord is famously said to be the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7), but it is also maintained that *perfect* love drives out all fear (1 John 4:18). It seems that Kant believes something like this perfect love is attainable for human beings at a much earlier stage of development; cf. nn. 40 above and 121 below.

claim it as the sole efficient cause would be to fail to understand that 'delights' in any particular case vary qualitatively with their intentional objects: another piece of Platonic analysis. Thus man's goal is not to secure delight, but to be able to know God—which is experientially delightful."⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the radical religiosity of Augustine's focus allowed for complete convergence between ordered, other-motivated loving and ultimate fulfillment, thereby leaving to his followers the task of fully examining the structure of the good moral act and its relation to eudaemonism.⁵⁰

Although Anselm's ethical reflections are brief, he undertook such an examination with striking acuity. In his work *On the Fall of the Devil* Anselm pursues the question of how that spirit may have fallen, and of course no recourse can be made to the common moralist's explanation (scapegoat?) of the body and its sensory desires. He proposes a thought experiment of God creating an amoral angel, being given only the will for happiness (*affectio commodi*). Such a being would will happiness successfully "to the degree that he knows it" and without concern for his means except in relation to that happiness; he may mistakenly will to be like God, but an act willed through mere incapacity to do otherwise could not be called just or unjust.⁵¹ The salient moral point appears to be that, although there are no passions potentially blocking or distorting reason, the Angel seems to lack rational agency altogether in the sense in which we experience it. Anselm circumvents this implication by distinguishing between two kinds of good and evil—a moral good, "justice," to which the evil of injustice is opposed, and another good, the "useful," to which the harmful is opposed.⁵² If, at the opposite hypothetical extreme, an angel were given only "the will for justice" (*affectio iustitiae*),⁵³ he would certainly will what is fitting, but there is a sense in which we cannot call him just. It

⁴⁹ Rist, *Augustine*, 158, describing the turning point in *Replies to Simplicianus* (ca. AD 396); cf. 174.

⁵⁰ For some links with his followers, see Jeffrey Brower, "Anselm on Ethics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, ed. B. Davies and B. Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 251 n. 5; John Boler, "Reflections on John Duns Scotus on the Will," in *Emotions and Choice from Boethius to Descartes*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund and Mikko Yrjönsuuri (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002), 296; John Hare, "Scotus on Morality and Nature," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 9 (2000), 15; Kent, "Rethinking Moral Dispositions," 353.

⁵¹ Anselm, *On the Fall of the Devil*, in *The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 13. All Anselm references follow this edition and are cited by section number. Even if the amoral angel calculated correctly, he could never be "perfectly and worthily happy," since he lacks "a morally good will" (ibid.).

⁵² Ibid. 12. Kant makes a similar distinction (*CPR* 5:59–60). Standard medieval eudaemonism distinguished between two kinds of being but not two kinds of good (see Brower, "Anselm on Ethics," 225–33).

⁵³ For the philosophical senses of "will" in Anselm, see *De concordia* 3.11–12.

is only in a being possessing both wills that meaningful moral conflict can occur—and thus our own experience, wherein we find that every creature capable of sensation tends to the useful and avoids the harmful, but among rational and free creatures, only some want justice and flee from injustice, willing happiness only when it can be willed justly.⁵⁴ During the fall itself, all the angels knew nothing of the consequences of rectitude and its lack, while one set freely abandoned this rectitude and the other persevered.⁵⁵ Even after this fallout we find within ourselves the beautiful traces of that “quasi absolute good” of justice, whose “natural dignity” reveals our previous adornment and continued indebtedness.⁵⁶

Anselm’s thought experiment thus made possible a novel moral clarity.⁵⁷ Just as it is blasphemous to seek reward from the supreme goodness other than that goodness itself—which is not to love it at all⁵⁸—so the seeking of rectitude is justice only insofar as it is sought for its own sake.⁵⁹ For Anselm, justice is “maintaining rectitude for its own sake,” freedom of will is the power given for maintaining this justice,⁶⁰ and indeed truth, justice and rectitude mutually define one another.⁶¹ He also shares Kant’s projects of attributing a supreme and inviolable

⁵⁴ Anselm *On the Fall of the Devil* 12, 14, cf. 15.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 4, 23, 25, 27. In *Why God Became Man* 1.17 Anselm also points out the different degree of praiseworthiness of two individuals who remain steadfast, the one being unacquainted with the punishment of sin and the other “who looks all the time upon eternal punishment.”

⁵⁶ Anselm *On the Fall of the Devil* 16.

⁵⁷ Kent (*Virtues of the Will*, 198) comments on Anselm’s two affections: “As the agent’s ability to will something other than what is advantageous to himself helps to explain the Christian conception of love, so the ability to will what is advantageous at the expense of what is morally good helps to explain the Christian conception of sin.”

⁵⁸ Anselm *Monologion* 70. The two affections are asymmetrical: “the disposition to will the advantageous is not itself what it ‘wills,’ whereas the one to will uprightness is uprightness” (*De Concordia* 3.12), and “Now the will to be just is actually justice itself, but the will to be happy is not happiness itself because not everyone who wills it has it” (3.13). For connections with the love of God, see Brower, “Anselm on Ethics,” 241–42.

⁵⁹ Anselm *On Truth* 12. In his exhaustive study of truth and freedom in Anselm, Bernd Goebel concludes after refuting various contenders that, for Anselm, moral goodness is rightness of the will, willed for the sake of rightness of the will (*Rectitudo: Wahrheit und Freiheit bei Anselm von Canterbury* [Münster: Aschendorff, 2001], 421–24).

⁶⁰ Anselm *On Free Will* 3, 10. Anselm’s position seems to be that it is creaturely freedom that requires alternative possibilities and that these are required only once. In this manner he can consistently maintain that freedom in its fullest and truest sense is the inability not to choose rightly, as in the cases of God and the righteous angels; see *Why God Became Man* 1.12; Thomas Williams and Sandra Visser, “Anselm’s Account of Freedom,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 31 (2001): 234–35, 243–44.

⁶¹ See Anselm *On Truth* 12, *Why God Became Man* 1.12. *On Truth* 12 and *De Concordia* 3.2 both define justice as rectitude of will preserved for its own sake. Compare Kant, *MM* 6:429. Anselm *On Truth* 4 cites John 8:44 in connection with rectitude—a favorite passage of Kant’s for this very reason (*R* 6:42n, *MM* 6:42; cf. *A* 7:295).

value to rectitude (a morally good will),⁶² and of distinguishing moral goodness from mere natural goodness.⁶³ He wishes, like Kant, to draw attention to the remarkable distinctiveness of rational nature: that it is able to distinguish between just and unjust, true and untrue, good and not good, and greater and lesser goods.⁶⁴ Given that the mere ability so to judge is "quite pointless and superfluous," the human vocation must be "to love or spurn (with appropriate intensity) the object judged," and so increasingly to actualize the potential of the Image impressed upon it.⁶⁵ Anselm's endorsement of moral behavior being unqualifiedly done for its own sake refutes the idea that the "moral ought" arose in the voluntaristic, skeptical fourteenth century, while Anselm's Platonic and Augustinian focus upon the experienced nature of love and justice undermines dismissal of the moral ought as coherent only in terms of divine command.⁶⁶

However, Anselm used his distinction between the *affectio commodi* and the *affectio iustitiae* in a limited manner, since he thought our fallen nature had reduced the latter to such an extent that rectitude could only be possible as a theological virtue.⁶⁷ In Scotus the *affectio*

⁶² "You can see that there is nothing freer than a right will since no alien power can take away its rectitude" (Anselm *On Free Will* 9). Augustine had defined "good will" as "a will by which we desire to live upright and honorable lives and to attain the highest wisdom" (*On Free Choice of the Will*, trans. Thomas Williams [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993], 1.12, 19; cf. 2.13–14, 57, and *Confessions* 13.9.10). See also n. 51 above.

⁶³ Anselm *On Free Will* 13: "By saying that it is 'for the sake of rectitude itself' it is distinguished from the power of preserving rectitude for some other reason, for example for money, or just naturally. A dog preserves rectitude of will naturally when it loves its young or the master who cares for it" (cf. Kant's characteristic reference to a "morally (not naturally) good state of mind" in TP 8:283).

⁶⁴ See Anselm *Why God Became Man* 2.1: "For the reason why it [i.e., a rational being] is rational is in order that it may distinguish between right and wrong, and between the greater good and the lesser good. . . . Rational nature was created to the end that it should love and choose, above all, the highest good, and that it should do this, not because of something else, but because of the highest good itself. For if the loving were for the sake of something else, it would have as its object not the highest good itself but the other thing."

⁶⁵ Anselm *Monologion* 67–68; cf. Kant, *G* 4:395–96, *CPR* 5:61–62. For Anselm's idea of virtue, see *De Concordia* 3.13: "Now God so ordained these two 'wills' or 'affectivities' in order that the will as a tool would employ the will to justice for commanding and ruling under the tutelage of the spirit, that is, the mind or reason, and the second one for obeying without any difficulty." More generally, see Brower, "Anselm on Ethics," 247–49, 252 n. 5, for Anselm's successful integration of elements of eudaemonist theory.

⁶⁶ Brower ("Anselm on Ethics," 223) argues that "at bottom . . . Anselm's theory is deontological in nature: unlike the eudaemonism characteristic of this period, it separates morality from happiness (at least conceptually) and emphasizes the need for agents to be motivated by justice rather than happiness."

⁶⁷ See, e.g., Anselm *De Concordia* 3.13. Scotus maintains that since we are commanded to love the infinite good above all, "the will can do this by its natural endowments, for the intellect could not rightly dictate something to the will that the natural will could not tend towards or carry out naturally." The virtue of charity, which perfects the affection for justice, is a theological virtue for Scotus (see *Ordinatio* 3, suppl., dist. 27, in *Duns Scotus on the Will*

*iustitiae*⁶⁸ is seen as innate and as the seat of the will’s freedom, even if we are initially saddled with a fundamental disharmony between the two *affectiones* due to the fall.⁶⁹ It is this move that allows Scotus to make the will itself a foundation of morality and so of the judgment of all human actions.⁷⁰ For Scotus, any act is immoral unless we allow the justice within us to bridle and temper our *affectio commodi* in accordance with the intrinsic value of the object and without needing to approve of its orientation to my own perfection or happiness.⁷¹ Moral

and *Morality*, trans. Allan Wolter [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1997], 281), but he maintains that evidence of love among the nonreligious makes this not demonstrable by reason (see Kent, “Rethinking Moral Dispositions,” 363–66, 370). All references to Scotus follow the Wolter edition.

⁶⁸ *Affectio* is variously translated as “affection” or sometimes “inclination” by Scotus scholars; *commodi* is translated as “the advantageous” and “possession”; *iustitiae* is standardly “justice.” Wolter defines *affectio commodi* as “a rational or intellectual appetite that seeks what the intellect shows is advantageous to the creature, particularly what makes it happy” (“Introduction” in *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, 11), or what perfects it or actualizes it (39). Compare Thomas Williams, “How Scotus Separates Morality from Happiness,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 69 (1995): 431; and Boler, “Reflections on John Duns Scotus on the Will,” 149 n. 55: “Anselm probably does mean by ‘*commodus*’ something like self-interest; Scotus is contrasting *affectio iustitiae* with the whole eudaemonist moral theory.” *Affectio iustitiae* is “an inclination for something intrinsically good (*bonum honestum*),” inviting the will to love God for his own sake as a supreme value, and all other goods “honestly,” in accord with right reason (Wolter, “Introduction,” 12, 40). Compare Kant, *MM* 6:481.

⁶⁹ See Mary Beth Ingham, *The Harmony of Goodness: Mutuality and Moral Living According to John Duns Scotus* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan, 1996), 35.

⁷⁰ Wolter (“Introduction,” 23) says the affection for justice grounds the moral law in Scotus, rather than the impersonal “eternal law” that Augustine inherited from the Stoics. The two affections, with one having clear moral priority, also differentiate Scotus from Ockham, who emphasizes “the power of the will to posit whatever end for itself” (Lagerlund and Yrjönsuuri, “Introduction” to their *Emotions and Choice from Boethius to Descartes*, 20). John Davenport (“Towards an Existential Virtue Ethics: Kierkegaard and MacIntyre,” in *Kierkegaard after MacIntyre*, ed. John Davenport and Anthony Rudd [Chicago: Open Court, 2001], 314–15 n. 42) directly challenges MacIntyre on this front: “in assigning ‘primacy’ to the will, Scotus is neither implying that intellect is ‘inert’ in relation to will nor that the will can be good only by obedience to revealed divine command, as MacIntyre claims (*Three Rival Versions*, 154–55). He is rather opening up the possibility that a virtuous will may not be best construed as a will toward the agent’s *eudaimonia*. . . . With this goes the notion that what makes a will vicious is not simply its misapprehension of or deviation from its own true good. We cannot assume that if *eudaimonia* as a natural *telos* is not the sole criterion, then only revealed divine command can take its place. There are alternatives, and for Scotus the *natural* duty of love for others illustrates this.” The role of divine command is a vexed issue of Scotus interpretation. Specifically on the rationality of the divine will, see esp. Mary Beth Ingham, “Letting Scotus Speak for Himself,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 10 (2001): 174–87; Hannes Möhle, “Scotus’s Theory of Natural Law,” in Williams, *Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, 314–18; Hare, “Scotus on Morality and Nature,” 30, and John Hare, *God’s Call* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 73. For Scotus, “God is to be loved” and whatever deductively follows from it is “natural law in the strict sense,” whereas the neighbor-love commands are looser in application and within the realm of (rational) divine discretion, hence “natural law in a secondary sense.”

⁷¹ That is, to seek or value things relative to the good-in-itself (*bonum in se*) of things, rather than relative to the nature of the willer (*bonum sibi*: John Boler, “Transcending the Natural:

goodness derives from conformity to what right reason dictates, understood as finding the "most suitable" and "exceedingly fitting" mode of participating in divine love.⁷² And this love, when perfected in us, "tends to the object for its own sake, and would do so even if, to assume the impossible, all benefit for the lover were excluded."⁷³ Citing Anselm's *On the Fall of the Devil*, Scotus posits that Lucifer's initial disorder was coveting happiness immoderately, abandoning that "first check-rein" on the affection for the beneficial and thus being ruled by nothing else than an "inordinate, immoderate appetite for the greatest beneficial good, namely, perfect happiness." The lesson learned is not the wickedness of self-interest, since *affectio commodi* is God given, but rather that we need not actually seek its preferred object, nor seek the beneficial all the time, nor above all else—and that we should use our liberty to wish for happiness less than, say, wishing God well, and not when it conflicts with loving our neighbor.⁷⁴

At the same time, Scotus is theoretically concerned with showing how well-ordered loving is secondarily ordered to perfection and self-fulfillment and, thus, how one's happiness can become a sort of reflex object of well-ordered love.⁷⁵ Accordingly, his libertarianism about the human will is qualified by his teaching that freedom is perfected by virtuous habits.⁷⁶ These habits incline (but do not determine) the sense

Duns Scotus on the Two Affections of the Will," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 67 [1993]: 111).

⁷² Wolter, "Introduction," 20, xiii; cf. Ingham, *Harmony of Goodness*, 64.

⁷³ Scotus *Ordinatio* 3, suppl., dist. 27, art. 1, 277. A number of biblical figures express similar counterfactuals: see Rom. 9:3, Matt. 27:46, Exod. 32:32, Job 13:15, Phil. 2:5 (cited by Hare, *God's Call*, 59, "Scotus on Morality and Nature," 18, 36). For Scotus, this strictly nonpossessive charity is the first-level, legitimating condition of moral action, the second motive being the love we have because the object communally unites with us, and the third being the satisfaction of happiness (on proper love of God, see Wolter, "Introduction," 91; and Scotus *Ordinatio* 3, suppl., dist. 27, art. 2, 277–79; Hare, *God's Call*, 71).

⁷⁴ Scotus *Ordinatio* 2, dist. 6, q. 2, 295–302. Compare Scotus's rejection of Aquinas's and Henry of Ghent's views of free will—for Scotus, the pilgrim does "for the most part" want happiness, and the will cannot recoil "from that object in which there is no aspect of evil or defect of good. . . . Nevertheless, [the will] does not of necessity will happiness either in general or in particular" (*Ordinatio* 3, dist. 17, 154–62). For Aquinas's view, see n. 122 below.

⁷⁵ Wolter, "Introduction," 13, cf. 40. Scotus claims that the supernatural virtue of hope perfects the affection for advantage, which is interesting in connection with Kant's greater subordination of advantage coupled with his reduced religiosity. For Kant's religious views, see n. 40 above.

⁷⁶ For Scotus's inclusion of compatibilist elements (e.g., about grace and freedom) within a broadly libertarian system, see Boler, "Reflections on John Duns Scotus on the Will," 131–33; and Ingham, "Letting Scotus Speak for Himself." His view of freedom and virtue closely parallels Anselm's, except that Anselm defines true freedom in terms of rectitude, whereas, for Scotus, "a free will is more perfect to the degree that it follows right reason and remains steadfast in this pursuit. But this is a perfection of freedom and is not to be identified with it" (Douglas Langston, "Did Scotus Embrace Anselm's Notion of Freedom?" *Medieval Philosophy*

appetites and (especially) the will toward the just act;⁷⁷ and whenever a virtuous habit inclines one to what reason independently discerns as just, the act is more intensely meritorious than if the will acted alone.⁷⁸

B. Kant's Moderate Morality

If the previous section shows that Plato and some medieval Augustinians may be underexplored resources for Kantians in their reflections on duty, happiness, and virtue, the current section intends to show followers of Plato or Augustine—and perhaps of Aristotle as well—that if Kant's approach to duty in the moral life is mistaken, it must be so in a manner considerably more subtle and limited than is commonly alleged. For Kant points to genuine practical concerns (often shared by MacIntyre's Aristotle) on the limits of interest as a guide to ethics, maintaining that in cases of conflict, duty must prevail over interest, and that in order to secure this one must trust the objective determination of justice rather than one's inclinations.⁷⁹

A prevalent misreading of Kant would have his most basic, formal-level principles be obedience to the Categorical Imperative in both its Formula of Universal Law and Formula of Humanity versions, along with the requirement that every act be performed for the sake of duty. A far more helpful formulation would be that, *whenever duty is at stake*,

and *Theology* 5 [1996]: 159; cf. 156–59). See Ingham on virtue as the continual development of (rational and orderly) love, and the need for revelation as chiefly based on revealing God's loving nature rather than the Decalogue's commands (“Letting Scotus Speak for Himself,” 187; *Harmony of Goodness*, 151).

⁷⁷ For subtle remarks on virtue as an aptitude inclining the will to correct acts promptly and with delight, and the more qualified sense in which such habits in the sense appetite can also be called virtues, see Scotus *Ordinatio* 3, suppl., 33, 227–31. For Scotus within the context of medieval debates on the locus of Aristotelian virtues, see Kent, *Virtues of the Will*, esp. chap. 5, and “Rethinking Moral Dispositions,” 353.

⁷⁸ Scotus's high valuation of choice prevents him from understanding virtue straightforwardly as Aristotelian “second nature.” He maintains that no natural inclination nor practical habit can ever replace the importance of deliberation and choice within the virtuous act—and so (in a favorite example of Kant's), a habitual disposition to give alms is not the virtue that conscious reflection brings. He also maintains that “no virtue acts with absolutely no deliberation” and that the dictum of “the Philosopher” ought to be understood to mean that the deliberation of the moral expert becomes “imperceptibly short” because of “the rapidity with which the practical inference is made” (*Ordinatio* 3, suppl., dist. 33, 236; see Ingham, *Harmony of Goodness*, 78–86, 127–28, and “Letting Scotus Speak for Himself,” 189–90). Kent offers a thought experiment indicating that few would find someone virtuous if it were in fact true that she “simply cannot tell a lie” and that such sayings are mere harmless exaggerations whenever they denote true virtue (“Rethinking Moral Dispositions,” 357).

⁷⁹ See, e.g., n. 83 below. The many ways in which Kant and Aristotle agree on substantive moral issues and disagree more on terminology and conceptualization are discussed at length in several of the essays in Engstrom and Whiting, *Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics*, esp. Stephen Engstrom, “Happiness and the Highest Good in Aristotle and Kant,” 102–38.

one ought to act in accordance with duty and on the basis of duty but that considerable latitude for permissible pursuits of happiness still exists within these bounds.⁸⁰

Kant's understanding of the place of happiness in the *Groundwork* (1785) and the second *Critique* (1788) is clearly stated in the 1793 essay, "On the Common Saying: That May Be True in Theory, But It Is of No Use in Practice." Against a (still familiar) caricature of his theory presented by Christian Garve, Kant writes that the maxim of duty does not eliminate concern for happiness, except in cases of a "collision" of one's ends of happiness with the moral law of duty (TP 8:282–83). It "quite contradicts" his claims to say that the virtuous person will have no concern for his happiness "even when it is not a matter of duty and there would be no conflict with it" (TP 8:281). This had indeed been clear in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, where Kant denounces "self-conceit," understood as the state in which "self-love makes itself law-giving and the unconditional practical principle." Mere "self-love," by contrast, is only "infringed upon," being restricted to the conditions of the rational law and thereupon becoming worthy of the title "rational self-love" (CPR 5:73–74). Thus the claims of the "dear self" must be denied only insofar as its aspirations cannot be universalized by autonomous rationality (G 4:439, 407, CPR 5:73). Moral reason does limit the conditions of the value of happiness (A 7:326), and so a distinction between the principle of happiness and that of morality is necessary; but an opposition between them is not thereby required, since claims to happiness are not renounced but only not taken account of "as soon as duty is in question" (CPR 5:93, cf. 72, 118; MM 6:400).

If such collisions are possible, the prioritization of duty over interest is morally necessary, and Kant emphasizes this hierarchical approach in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. Since a finite being's maxims can never exclude the material incentive of self-love in favor of the law alone, the contrast between the good and evil person must come in the form of the maxim: whether self-love or the law is made the condition of the other, or, otherwise put, which is made subordinate (R 6:36; cf. A 7:277). It is not the inclinations themselves but rather the reversal of this order that constitutes evil.⁸¹ A proper order

⁸⁰ The Stoics, by contrast, applied the notion of duty to "the whole of one's life and virtually everything one does, if one is truly virtuous" (John Cooper, "Eudaimonism, the Appeal to Nature, and 'Moral Duty' in Stoicism," in Engstrom and Whiting, *Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics*, 277, cf. 262; similarly, Annas, "Prudence and Morality," 252).

⁸¹ See too the remarks that the Stoics—despite their sound understanding of virtue as a battle against an enemy within—were mistaken in seeing the inclinations as the chief enemy,

and a nonhypocritical profession of reverence for the moral law must make that law the "supreme condition" of the satisfaction of self-interest, and in this sense the law must be one's "self-sufficient" and "sole" incentive (*R* 6:36, 42n; cf. *CPR* 5:62). The proclivity to incorporate lower incentives in our maxims and make them supreme is what Kant calls the "tendency to evil" (*R* 6:43).

It is important not to soften Kant's insistence on the purity needed to properly decipher duty in view of his concession that "counterweights" are frequently necessary for motivation. Kant indeed writes that the principle of the physical good and that of the moral good are unavoidably mixed in practice (*A* 7:277) and that the prospects of a cheerful enjoyment of a disciplined life (*à la* Epicurus) might be needed to offset our bias toward the allurements of vice.⁸² But this subjective necessity ought not to prejudice objective moral truths, and thus advantage must be "separated and washed" by reason before it can serve as a reliable ally (*CPR* 5:93).⁸³ The precise determination of duty is possible only through abstracting from empirical ends altogether, allowing no incentive of happiness to get "mixed, unnoticed, into the determination of duty" (*TP* 8:278–79; cf. *R* 6:4). Every volition may require a matter, and inclinations may always affect our desire, but we can nonetheless remain free from having such motives as the determining ground and condition of our maxims (*CPR* 5:34, 117, *R* 6:6–8n). Kant's central theoretical appeal to such a purified conception of advantage is his idea of the supreme good, wherein one hopes for one's happiness in a universalizable fashion (*MM* 6:481): only in proportion to her virtue and worthiness, and so with an end that already includes the moral law as determining ground (*CPR* 5:109, 130). Since advancing this supreme good is an end that is also a duty, to be performed for duty's sake, one also avoids the impure, cultic religious idea that falsely imputes to God "the principle of happiness as the supreme condition of his commands" (*R* 6:51, cf. 139).⁸⁴ It is within this framework that we must understand Kant's more extreme claims, such as that the doctrine of happiness has its "whole foundation" in empirical

rather than the malice of the human heart in its tendency to adopt "soul-corrupting principles" (Kant, *R* 6:57).

⁸² Kant, *CPR* 5:88, *MM* 6:216; cf. *R* 6:161, 135. Compare *CPR* 5:115 on Epicurus and n. 106 below for Kant's endorsement of cultivated self-enjoyment.

⁸³ For such reasons Kantian "deontology" insists that the concept of good and evil can only be determined after the moral law and by means of it (*CPR* 5:62–63, 109). Interestingly, MacIntyre makes a similar point against sophistic and utilitarian approaches to ethics—see *Whose Justice?* 77, *Three Rival Versions*, 97.

⁸⁴ For Kant and Augustine on religion, sanctions, and moral motivation, see nn. 48 and 40 above; for qualified criticisms of religious eudaemonism, see n. 121 below.

principles, whereas in the doctrine of morals “they do not make even the smallest addition to it” (*CPR* 5:92).

Understanding the conditional “whenever duty is at stake” also provides insight into Kant’s controversial claim that we are to act “for the sake of” or “from” duty (*aus Pflicht*). For, given that there is a great deal of overlap between legal moral choices and enlightened self-interest, it is tempting to reduce morality to such interest and thereby to open oneself up to a ground-level principle that in other cases is precisely the principle of evil (*MM* 6:447; cf. *G* 4:442).⁸⁵ But one cannot have faith that one’s prereflective, innocent kindness or generosity will last, for it is easily seduced, contingent, and precarious just insofar as it is dependent on subjective satisfaction rather than objective dedication to dutiful behavior.⁸⁶

The same human being can . . . leave an intellectual conversation, such as he otherwise values highly, in order to take his place at the gaming table; he can even repulse a poor man whom at other times it is a joy for him to benefit because he now has only enough money in his pocket to pay for his admission to the theater. If the determination of his will rests on the feeling of agreeableness or disagreeableness that he expects from some cause, it is all the same to him by what kind of representation he is affected. The only thing that concerns him, in order to decide upon a choice, is how intense, how long, how easily acquired, and how often repeated this agreeableness is. (*CPR* 5:23)⁸⁷

Thus, even kindly inclinations are “blind and servile,” and, whenever morality is in question, consideration of duty must have precedent and become one’s determining ground in order to provide freedom for clear direction amidst the full spectrum of situations and novel temptations (*CPR* 5:118, *MM* 6:383–84).

When we add to this Kant’s more famous arguments that the only thing of intrinsic and incomparable worth is a good will, it becomes far more difficult not to respect his position that morality—as opposed to mere legality—requires us to act from duty.⁸⁸ The relentless focus

⁸⁵ Kant depicts the biblical narrative of the fall as the daily decision of each of us, as we turn away from acting out of duty alone, preferring an obedience that is merely conditional because it is a means to self-love, until finally—through the triumph of sensory inducements over the incentive of the law—sin comes to be (*R* 6:42, cf. 42n).

⁸⁶ Compare Kant, *G* 4:390, 404–5, *CPR* 5:25–26, TP 8:286–87.

⁸⁷ Note the parallel with Anselm’s solely happiness-seeking angel.

⁸⁸ Kant, *CPR* 5:71, 81, *MM* 6:18–20, *R* 6:14. See also Allen Wood’s remarks on acting *aus Pflicht* as only a subset of those acts done out of good will, as well as the idea that any act in accordance with duty (*pflichtmäßig*) does have moral worth as dutiful, just not the *special sort* of moral worth of acts from duty (*Kant’s Ethical Thought* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 26–35). For Anselm and Augustine on “good will,” see n. 62 above and context.

of Kantian ethics is to show that the fundamental basis of the moral life is something quite different than optimal calculation—that goodness and enjoyment have different organizing principles, possessing independent laws and courts.⁸⁹ This focus makes the thrust of his moral philosophy corrective rather than balanced; but it seems to me that, if he were constructing a scholastic or Hegelian system, and were freed from the *bête noire* of a historically preeminent moral theory he believed crucially mistaken, then his embrace of the pursuit of happiness (in its place) would have been unmistakable. As his teaching stands, he may indeed have overreacted by defining prudential concerns to be altogether outside of the doctrine of morals, strictly speaking (*CPR* 5: 130). He bars prudence from the majestic title “moral” partly because the pursuit of happiness is innate and unavoidable,⁹⁰ partly because of the limitations and dangers of happiness as a practical guide, and partly because counsels appealing to our contingent preferences and receptivity to happiness can only yield hypothetical imperatives—however wise (*TP* 8:286–87). But though we may question the practical impact of Kant’s demotion here, it is equally important to understand that Kant does not leave dedication to one’s own happiness as a merely permitted indulgence. For Kant maintains that we have in certain respects an indirect duty to seek happiness, “partly because happiness (to which belong skill, health, wealth) contains means for the fulfillment of one’s duty, and partly because lack of it (e.g., poverty) contains temptations to transgress one’s duty.”⁹¹ And here Kant may perhaps save many of the moral appearances supporting Aristotelian eudaemonism, even while almost perfectly reversing Aristotle’s heavy prioritization of happiness over ethics.⁹²

⁸⁹ See, e.g., Kant, *G* 4:442, *CPR* 5:37, 59–61, 89, 111–13.

⁹⁰ Kant, *G* 4:399, 415–16, *CPR* 5:37, *MM* 6:386.

⁹¹ Kant, *CPR* 5:93; cf. *G* 4:399, *CPR* 5:20, *MM* 6:388. Similarly Scotus (*Ordinatio* II, dist. 6, 2, 302): “And thus the good [angels] could have wanted happiness so that, by having it, they could love the highest good more perfectly.”

⁹² For Aristotle, happiness is the only good we seek for its own sake *alone* (White, *Individual and Conflict*, 234–35, 330; and T. H. Irwin, review of *Individual and Conflict*, *Ethics* 114, no. 4 [2004]: 856). Aristotle calls *eudaimonia* an end “complete without qualification” because we always choose it for itself but never for the sake of something else, whereas various other goods and excellences we may indeed choose for themselves (even if nothing else resulted), but we may also choose them for the sake of *eudaimonia* (*NE* 1.7, 1097a33–b7). Contrast the stronger eudaemonism of 1.12, 1102a2–4, asserting that we all do “everything else” for the sake of this one thing. See also the (un-Kantian and questionable) greater praise for happiness than justice (1101b25–26). For one Stoicizing possibility of reconciling this eudaemonism with extensive apparent altruism, see n. 118 below.

C. *Costly Moral Freedom*

In this section, we will contextualize Kant's subordination of happiness to ideal moral ends within his broader theory of freedom and practical reason. Along with his Platonic and Augustinian predecessors, Kant aimed to give a fundamental theoretical explanation and justification of highly demanding moral acts—something that may be a weak point of MacIntyre's common Aristotelian model of the practical syllogism.

For Kant, nature has given us a choice not only of means but also of the ordering of ends that differ in kind, which allows the major premise of our practical syllogism to be a distinctively moral one whenever reason so demands, rather than a hard-wired constitution seeking well-being only.⁹³ The human being is “not so completely an animal” that she sees happiness as the only thing that counts, inevitably using reason as a tool for the merely natural ends that instinct alone would probably be adequate or even superior in attaining.⁹⁴ Similar observations suggest that although Kant famously did not ground his normative theory on human nature (*G* 4:460, *CPR* 5:80), he is singularly intrigued by the moral possibilities and inclinations present in human nature.⁹⁵ For Kant, the true value and status of the person comes not from mere rationality or the ability to set oneself ends⁹⁶ but rather from what he refers to as the noumenal or intelligible self, the “original moral predisposition in us” (*R* 6:49) or the humanity or personality within us.⁹⁷ “The most rational being of this world might still need incentives”; but the human being, in its personality, has the capacity

⁹³ See Kant, *CPR* 5:90, *G* 4:395–96, *TP* 8:282, with the distinction between *das Gute* and *das Wohl* (well-being), alleging an ambiguity in the Aristotelian idea that we pursue everything under the form of the good (*CPR* 5:59–60).

⁹⁴ See Kant, *CPR* 5:61–62, *G* 4:395–96. Scotus too considers eudaemonistic reduction a form of animalization. According to Boler (“Transcending the Natural,” 122, cf. 110), Scotus offers an implicit but far-reaching critique of the entire eudaemonistic project, maintaining that “it is only the (mistaken) assumption that a rational agent is simply a higher form of natural agent that makes a self-realization scheme seem plausible in the first place.”

⁹⁵ Kant refers to “personality” as “freedom and independence from the mechanism of the whole of nature” (*CPR* 5:86–87). But the “whole of nature” from which one is free is qualified, since one “is bound only to act in conformity with his own will, which, however, in accordance with nature’s end is a will giving universal law” (*G* 4:432).

⁹⁶ See esp. *MM* 6:434–35. This limited value is commonly claimed as perhaps the highest human value by contemporary appropriators of Kant; see, e.g., Wood, *Kant’s Ethical Thought*, 5; and especially the jarring misuse of *CPR* 5:161–62 in Martha Nussbaum, *Sex and Social Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 79, cf. 384 n. 9. Compare the contrast of Scotus and Ockham in n. 70 above.

⁹⁷ The disposition to personality makes each human a rational “and at the same time responsible being,” with a “susceptibility to respect for the moral law as of itself a sufficient incentive to the power of choice” (Kant, *R* 6:26–27; cf. *MM* 6:223, 434–35).

to find the moral law itself an incentive.⁹⁸ Here, Kant distinguishes freedom of the power of choice (*Willkür*) from his central moral concept of “will” (*Wille*), with the latter grounding our freedom from determination by sensible impulses, in favor of determination by the moral law alone.⁹⁹

The disposition, personality, or “humanity that dwells within” each person aims to draw us into a greater reverence for that second, highest, and true vocation that it reveals, urging us to overcome passive abandonment to ease and comfort in favor of duties to virtue and self-perfection.¹⁰⁰ In view of this it should come as no surprise that it is no longer disputed among serious students of Kant whether virtue plays a central role in his ethics;¹⁰¹ and, while he has a more harshly dichotomous approach to habitual inclination, custom, and the emotions than many find acceptable,¹⁰² his attempt to combine libertarian freedom, natural moral ends, and virtuous habituation does have Augustinian precedents.¹⁰³ For Kant, true virtue is a firmly grounded, non-

⁹⁸ See Kant, *R* 6:26n, 26–27; cf. *TP* 8:287, *CPR* 5:99, 107–8, and *MM* 6:449 on the role of the noumenal self and the immutable order which it perceives. On the speculative impenetrability of the practical influence of “a mere intellectual idea,” see *G* 4:461, *CPR* 5:79–80, *R* 6:59n; cf. *G* 4:438–39, 459. For the Platonic character of Kantian reason, see Wood, *Kant’s Ethical Thought*, 121–22; and Karl Ameriks, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*, ed. Karl Ameriks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 8–9; but for the sense in which Kant is a subjective rather than an objective idealist, see Frederick Beiser, “The Enlightenment and Idealism,” in Ameriks, *Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*, 25, 33–34; and Vittorio Hösle, *Objective Idealism, Ethics, and Politics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 28–29.

⁹⁹ See esp. Kant, *MM* 6:213–14. Compare Stephen Engstrom, “The Inner Freedom of Virtue,” in *Kant’s Metaphysics of Morals: Interpretive Essays*, ed. Mark Timmons (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 294–95. See Kant, *G* 4:446, 459 for more definitions of will, and *CPR* 5:33, 117, for the contrast of “negative” and “positive” freedom.

¹⁰⁰ Compare Kant, *CPR* 5:87, *TP* 8:287, *A* 7:324–25, and esp. *MM* 6:387.

¹⁰¹ For the basic outlines of current scholarship, see Wood, *Kant’s Ethical Thought*, 329–33; Lara Denis, “Kant’s Conception of Virtue,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant and Modern Philosophy*, ed. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 505–37. For more extensive discussion, see Nancy Sherman, *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and G. Felicitas Munzel, *Kant’s Conception of Moral Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), with the former emphasizing Kant’s similarities with Aristotle, and the latter their differences.

¹⁰² See, e.g., Kant, *MM* 6:407, 409, 383–84, *A* 7:147; Hösle, *Morals and Politics*, 101–2.

¹⁰³ The importance of contingency for Plato is not clear and seems to be frequently denied (e.g., *Timaeus* 86d–87b, *Laws* 5.731c; but cf. *Republic* 10.617de, 619ab). For Augustine its importance is a key argument of *On Free Choice of the Will* (2.1, 30, 3.1, 70, 3.17, 105), which he later claims (disputably) to have never repudiated (*Retractiones* 1.9.2–6). For Anselm, see n. 60 above. For Scotus, see n. 76 above. For “freedom” understood in terms of habitual, natural, or divine moral perfection, see Augustine’s views in *City of God* 22.30; Rist, *Augustine*, 133–35 with n. 105; and *Real Ethics*, 105. For Plotinus’s “freedom” see Rist, *Plotinus*, 77–80, 136–37; and for Anselm, see n. 60 above. Scotus and Kant are distinctive in their resistance to full habituation to virtue; for Scotus, see nn. 76 and 78 above; for Kant, see n. 102 above. For

sensual disposition and aptitude to fulfill one's duty arising from "considered, firm, and continually purified principles" (*MM* 6:383, *R* 6:23n). Each case should bring forth self-conscious reflection, but thereupon the possibility of deviating from internal lawgiving should make the healthy soul shudder, and freedom is revealed in direct proportion to one's *inability* to resist morality's call to duty.¹⁰⁴ And, although Kant never saw such a complete possibility of internal moral harmony as Aristotle seemed to,¹⁰⁵ he makes it clear (at least in his later writings) that proper habits increase one's capacities for pleasures¹⁰⁶ as well as one's affective delight in doing one's duties, notably including beneficence.¹⁰⁷

Kant's model of human nature and freedom supports not only a substantive virtue theory but also a theory of the possibility and rationality of distinctively demanding moral behavior. For it is the Kantian

Rist's excellent treatment of the relation of moral freedom and libertarian freedom, see *Real Ethics*, 69–70, 201–3, and "Democracy and Religious Values," 17.

¹⁰⁴ See Kant, *MM* 6:226–27, 382n–384, 406. For an interpretation of Kant's suggestion "that the greatest capacity to be morally compelled is the height of freedom," see Engstrom, "Inner Freedom of Virtue," esp. 293, 313–14.

¹⁰⁵ Kant's departure from Aristotle on temperance is not merely a result of different concepts of human nature (as is emphasized by Allen Wood, "Kant versus Eudaimonism," in *Kant's Legacy: Essays in Honor of Lewis White Beck*, ed. Predrag Cicovacki [Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2001], 261–81) but also of a sense of the scope of ethical demands. For Kant, no creature could ever come to thoroughly like fulfilling all moral laws, precluding any possibility of contrary desire, and hence self-constraint and sacrifice remain necessary (*CPR* 5:83–84; cf. *MM* 6:386). Similarly, the Stoics could not have portrayed their sage as beyond temptation "if they had represented the law in all its purity and strictness, as the precept of the Gospel does" (*CPR* 5:127n). If Aristotle has a more optimistic concept of temperance (see n. 37 above), it may be in large part because of his unduly lax sense of justice, outstandingly in relation to foreigners and those considered natural slaves (see n. 142 below).

¹⁰⁶ See the decisive *A* 7:236–37, distinguishing a cultivating sort of self-gratification from a debilitating sort and encouraging his audience to deny themselves pleasures for the sake of increasing them. Kant also regularly evidences a strong theory of the insatiability and destructiveness of vicious indulgence (*G* 4:396, *CPR* 5:118, *MM* 6:427, *A* 7:233, "On a Conjectural Beginning of Human History" [CB] 8:111, in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*). For Kant's subtle attempts to maintain virtue as preeminently its own reward despite the benefits conferred by it and self-consciousness of it, see *MM* 6:387–88, 396, 399, and 438.

¹⁰⁷ For a helpful summary of three morally important roles feeling can play, see Denis, "Kant's Conception of Virtue," 516–18. See esp. Kant, *MM* 6:484: "But what is not done with pleasure but merely as compulsory virtue has no inner worth for one who attends to his duty in this way and such service is not loved by him; instead, he shirks as much as possible occasions for practicing virtue" (see also *MM* 6:456, *R* 6:145). For Schiller's parody of Kant—that one must seek to despise one's friends so that he can serve them with repugnance—and Kant's reply, see Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought*, 28, and *R* 6:23n. For delight in beneficence, see Kant's progressively more favorable response to the biblical commandment to love one's neighbor, about which he finally comes to believe that one is commanded to act beneficently and thereby develop one's aptitude to it (*G* 4:399, *CPR* 5:83, and *MM* 6:402; contrast Kant's views on "moral apathy" in n. 35 above). Scotus offers a similar rationale in interpreting Deut. 6: 5 as a full-fledged precept, not a mere ideal to which we strive (*Ordinatio* 3, suppl., dist. 27, 283–84).

“will” that uniquely allows rational beings to act simply in accordance with the representation of a universal “law of freedom” regardless of and even in clear opposition to the laws of nature and interest.¹⁰⁸ Such freedom reveals itself to be all the more sacred and incomprehensible in proportion to the strength of the sensory assailants it overcomes (*MM* 6:483). Kant argues that even a slavish man, convinced he could never forgo gratifying his lusts, would do so without hesitation on pain of execution for them; by contrast, through the distinct power of the ought he would know that he at least could and should accept that same execution to avoid perjuring himself on behalf of political murder (*CPR* 5:30).¹⁰⁹ Later Kant argues extensively that it is only philosophers who could so muddle the question of what “*pure morality*” is. This simple truth is revealed in depicting to a ten-year-old boy the travail of an honest man, being induced to join the calumniators of an innocent man, who never wavers in his resolve despite bribes and threats of increasingly horrible penalties (*CPR* 5:155–56). The boy would be raised step by step from approval to admiration and veneration, wishing that he might become such a man (though in different circumstances) and discovering that virtue is here worth so much precisely because of its costliness, not its profitableness (*CPR* 5:156).¹¹⁰ Elsewhere Kant marvels at the original moral predisposition in us, making reason’s commands so compelling—despite not promising or threatening anything—that even if the enjoyment of nature in defiance of the moral law could “alone make our life desirable,” such enjoyment would make us seem “unworthy of existence,” and we can instead “hold the whole of nature as nothing” (*R* 6:49).

Some antecedents to Kant here include Plato’s depiction of Socrates’ final hours, insisting on the causal priority of the mind’s perception of the honorable path over the impulse of his “sinews and bones” to

¹⁰⁸ Kant, *G* 4:412–13, 447, *CPR* 5:29, 65, *R* 6:59n.

¹⁰⁹ The critique of the slavish man here echoes Rousseau (see *Emile; or, On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom [New York: Basic Books, 1979], 325; cf. *Julie; or, The New Heloise*, trans. Philip Stewart and Jean Vaché [Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1997], appendix, 613; see also the echo of *Emile*, 290, at *CPR* 5:86). Rousseau and his precursor Fénelon play key (albeit convoluted) roles in the broad tradition that I am depicting; for reflections on the links between Augustine, Fénelon, Rousseau, and the ethics of self-interest, see Pierre Force, *Self-Interest before Adam Smith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 183–200; Christopher Brooke, “Rousseau’s Political Philosophy: Stoic and Augustinian Origins,” 94–123; Patrick Riley, “Rousseau, Fénelon, and the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns,” 78–93, both in *The Cambridge Companion to Rousseau*, ed. Patrick Riley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Helena Rosenblatt, *Rousseau and Geneva: From the “First Discourse” to the “Social Contract”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chap. 3. For English predecessors, see Stephen Darwall, *The British Moralists and the Internal ‘Ought’: 1640–1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹¹⁰ Such examples are central in Kant’s moral pedagogy; for the latter, see n. 40 above.

seek self-preservation through flight.¹¹¹ Augustine's *City of God*, despite its withering criticisms of pagan "virtue" and Roman glory mongering,¹¹² singles out Marcus Regulus as an "entirely great man" who willingly subjected himself to torture at the hands of the Carthaginians for the sake of the Roman good and the religious inviolability of his oath.¹¹³ Anselm very closely parallels Kant in maintaining that, if someone were threatened with death unless he told a lie, no necessity would prevent him from using his "power to maintain the uprightness of will purely for the sake of its uprightness."¹¹⁴

It is with Scotus, however—our Augustinian postdating the reemergence of Aristotle's ethical writings—that we find the most searching criticism of Aristotle's approach to such issues. Although in his discussion in *Nicomachean Ethics* 3 Aristotle focuses on how the courageous soldier is motivated by "the noble" (*to kalon*), Scotus picks up on other passages wherein Aristotle apparently attempts to show how such motivations cohere with his eudaemonism. He notes that the Aristotelian soldier could not be looking forward to compensation in the afterlife (since he does not believe in such things) but instead seeks his eudaemonistic good through honors or the "short period of intense pleasure" that precedes a noble death.¹¹⁵ Scotus answers with an alternative rationale: "On the contrary, here I simply love more what I want to save and shield from evil. I am willing to lose something else rather than this other, for whose sake I am willing to surrender my very existence. But brave persons of this sort are willing that both themselves and their act of virtue should cease to exist rather than that evil befall their state or country. Therefore, they simply love the public good,

¹¹¹ See Plato *Phaedo* 98e-99a; Rist, "Moral Motivation," 269.

¹¹² See Augustine *City of God* 5.12-20, 19.21, 25, and Letter 138.17 (in *Political Writings*, 40-41).

¹¹³ For Augustine's judgments on Regulus (who is no longer believed to be a historical figure), see *City of God* 3.18, 124, 1.24, 37. See the account of Regulus's sacrificial acts at *City of God* 1.15, 24.

¹¹⁴ Anselm *De Concordia* 1.6, 446. *Why God Became Man* 2.14 maintains that one should rather that the whole universe would perish, or that one take upon oneself all the sins of the universe, than to follow someone's command to kill the Christ; cf. 1.9, 277, on the voluntary motivation behind Christ's death.

¹¹⁵ Scotus mentions directly Aristotle *NE* 9.8 (1169a16-32); cf. also *NE* 3.8-9 (see 1116b35-1117b21, which notes the courageous man's concern with receiving honors and concedes that the exercise of some excellences is not pleasant "except in so far as it reaches its end") and Aristotle's noneudaemonistic *Rhetoric* 1.9, 1366b37-67a6. See Mary Keys on the magnanimous man's tension between his wish to see virtue as its own reward and his concern with external honors and personal preeminence (*Aquinas, Aristotle, and the Promise of the Common Good* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 144-47, 175-76 n. 4).

which they wish to preserve, more than they love themselves.”¹¹⁶ Scotus plausibly alleges that Aristotle is (on the one hand) attributing a motivation to such moral behavior far more self-interested than is likely¹¹⁷ and (on the other hand) must accordingly claim virtue to be far more self-rewarding than most any honest analysis could conclude.¹¹⁸ By contrast, Kant and his predecessors can clearly explain both the possibility and the morality of undeniably and knowingly subordinating one’s interests to a higher justice or good—and here one ought to think of a broad range of dangerous political or social dissidence just as much as the military defense of the state.

D. *Snapping the Elastic Self*

Although it is doubtful that any authentically Aristotelian theory would deny that one should pursue the nobler rather than the pleasanter route in such cases, it remains the case that Aristotle avoids sustained discussions of them, and it is not clear to me that his model of practical reason can effectively account for them.¹¹⁹ In what follows I will take

¹¹⁶ Scotus *Ordinatio* 3, suppl., dist. 27, art. 3, 282. Compare Carneades’ allegation of a contradiction between the Stoics’ eudaemonistic foundation and their ideals of justice (Annas, “Prudence and Morality,” 254).

¹¹⁷ In this vein, Tocqueville finds early nineteenth-century Americans constantly and “complacently” explaining how their sacrifices of time and money for others are actually explained by enlightened self-love. He finds that the Americans here “do honor to their philosophy rather than themselves,” for one often finds them “abandoning themselves to the disinterested and unreflective sparks that are natural to man” (see *Democracy in America*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000], vol. 2, pt. 2, chap. 8, 500–502; this eudaemonism is contrasted with the aristocratic ethos praising virtues of duty, sacrifice, and self-forgetfulness). For similar criticisms of egoistically explaining apparently altruistic behavior, see James Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 3rd ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1999), 75–76; Höle, *Morals and Politics*, 98 n. 29; Christine Korsgaard, “From Duty and for the Sake of the Noble: Kant and Aristotle on Morally Good Action,” in Engstrom and Whiting, *Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics*, 236 n. 28; contrast Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, 115.

¹¹⁸ For this Stoicizing strand in Aristotle, see Erik Wielenberg, “Egoism and *Eudaimonia*-Maximization in the *Nicomachean Ethics*,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 26 (2004): 277–95. Taking Aristotle *NE* 9.8 as his chief basis, Wielenberg shows that the person following *noûs* will always choose what is best for himself (1169a15, 281–82), which is done through always choosing to maximize his overall virtuousness, something conceptually distinct from acting to maximize his happiness (284–86). He thus assigns the greater good to himself even by choosing apparently sacrificial actions (282–83), but this would not include sacrificing one’s own *eudaimonia* for that of others (277). For Augustine and Kant’s replies, see n. 34 above. For a thorough attempt to understand Aristotle’s eudaemonistic justification of dangerous courage, see Szaif, “Aristotle on the Benefits of Virtue,” 190–91, 182–87.

¹¹⁹ See Rist’s argument that Aristotle’s acting “for the sake of the noble” (*to kalon*) “bypasses foundational issues in evoking Plato’s ghosts” (*Real Ethics*, 86–87, 146–50). “Unlike Plato, Aristotle assumes some sort of objectivist . . . aspect to morality . . . , and he assumes a general knowledge of what the best society and the best upbringing ‘for the sake of the noble’ would

issue, not necessarily with Aristotle or Aquinas themselves,¹²⁰ but with a standard Aristotelian account, which is crystallized in Thomistic accounts such as MacIntyre's—insofar as they do not vindicate irreducible this-worldly sacrifice by otherworldly appeals.¹²¹ In this view, the human end of well-being is naturally grafted upon the psyche as the final basis for all choice (or at least rational choice), the practical intellect's designation of one's good properly gives rise to choice, and free acts are understood as the rational self-determination of practical reason, which are sometimes interfered with by the revolt of appetite or will.¹²² But the self's well-being is enlarged, refined, and indeed con-

be like, concerning himself not with justifying such assumptions" (29). Compare White, *Individual and Conflict*, 238–44.

¹²⁰ For a more Kantian interpretation of Aristotle, in which "the good" without essential link to one's own ultimate good is taken as sufficient reason for action, see Korsgaard, "From Duty and for the Sake of the Noble," 214–19. This is Rousseau's own approach to the practical syllogism (see *Emile*, 289).

¹²¹ We will focus on Aristotelian and Thomistic attempts to justify Aristotelian this-worldly eudaemonism, although Aquinas of course has otherworldly resources to appeal to as well. In this light, his differences here with the traditions I am depicting would be subtle and chiefly concern his greater emphasis on eudaemonism in motivation; see nn. 122, 132, 133, and 136 below for Aquinas, which parallel what is questionable in Augustine in n. 39 above; contrast nn. 31, 48, 73. See also Tocqueville's sensible objections (*Democracy in America*, vol. 2, pt. 2, chap. 9, 504–5) to interpreting admirable religious devotion in eudaemonistic terms: "I have encountered zealous Christians who constantly forget themselves in order to work with more ardor for the happiness of all, and I have heard them claim that they were only acting this way in order to merit the goods of the other world; but I cannot prevent myself from thinking that they deceive themselves. I respect them too much to believe them. It is true that Christianity tells us that one must prefer others to oneself to gain Heaven; but Christianity tells us as well that one ought to do good to those like oneself out of love of God. . . . I therefore do not believe that the sole motive of religious men is interest; but I think that interest is the principal means religions themselves make use of to guide men, and I do not doubt that it is only from this side that they take hold of the crowd and become popular." Merold Westphal (*God, Guilt, and Death: An Existential Phenomenology of Religion* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984], chaps. 7–8) argues that the experience of nonutilitarian self-transcendence is a basic element of most religious pieties, even if more mundane self-interest is not excluded.

¹²² For MacIntyre, see n. 5 above; for Aristotle, see n. 92 above, and for Aquinas, *On Evil*, trans. Richard Regan and ed. Brian Davies (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), chap. 6, ST I 82.1–2. For introductions to Aquinas on the will, see Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 208–12; Brian Davies, "Introduction" to Aquinas, *On Evil*, 23–32; and Eleonore Stump, "Intellect, Will, and the Principle of Alternate Possibilities," in *Christian Theism and the Problems of Philosophy*, ed. Michael Beatty (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 266–70. It is disputed whether or in what sense Aquinas affirms freedom of contingency, but it is clear that the formal makeup of the soul is eudaemonistically determined: "as the intellect of necessity adheres to the first principles, the will must of necessity adhere to the last end, which is happiness" (ST I 82.1). Freedom of choice is "rooted in intellect's ability to determine (1) what the human good or ultimate end consists in and (2) alternative specifications of and means for attaining that good" (Scott MacDonald, "Egoistic Rationalism: Aquinas's Basis for Christian Morality," in Beatty, *Christian Theism and the Problems of Philosophy*, 337; cf. Boler, "Reflections on John Duns Scotus on the Will," 123). For Boethius's Aristotelian approach to happiness as sole end of the will, see Calvin Normore, "Goodness and Rational Choice in the Early Middle Ages," in Lagerlund and Yrjönsuuri,

stituted by its sociopolitical community and its virtues. Aristotle, Aquinas, and MacIntyre all argue that no person can flourish outside of a flourishing community, their interests being so closely interwoven.¹²³ And although the tradition aims for balance here, insisting against (Aristotle’s interpretation of) Plato that the whole cannot be happy if none of its parts are happy,¹²⁴ it is clear that, if the very existence of the political community were at stake, the part should be sacrificed for the whole.¹²⁵

However, if we ask why some part would believe this—rather than simply the whole and all the nonimplicated parts—some of the rationale seems to be based upon an ambiguity built into the major premise of Aristotelian eudaemonism. Whereas the typical statement of the agent’s major premise is to pursue “my good,”¹²⁶ the assumption of harmony between self and community at times makes the major premise appear as “my good and the good.”¹²⁷ Then, at a time when some higher good certainly appears to require me to sacrifice “my good,” one can see “the good” alone slip in as the major premise.¹²⁸ But it

Emotions and Choice from Boethius to Descartes, 31–33. For Scotus’s rejection of this approach, see n. 74 above.

¹²³ See, e.g., Aristotle *Politics* (*Pol.*) 1.2, 1253a2–28; Aquinas *ST* II-II 47.10 ad 2.

¹²⁴ See Aristotle *Pol.* 2.5, 1264b15–23. For the mysteriousness of Aristotle’s objection here—given that in Plato’s account the various parts are said to be happy—see Trevor Saunders’s commentary, *Politics: Books I and II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 125–26. But more generally we should agree with Höle that Aristotle’s critique of Plato’s utopian collectivism is one respect in which he has made a major advancement over Plato (see *Morals and Politics*, 14–16).

¹²⁵ The question of whether it is rational to give one’s life for the benefit of society (barring appeal to religious motivation) was an ongoing debate at the University of Paris beginning in the late, thirteenth century. Godfrey of Fontaines (ca. 1250–1306) is representative of the Aristotelian position in arguing for its self-interested rationality, since “a part is sacrificed for the whole” (see Lagerlund and Yrjönsuuri, “Introduction,” 16–17).

¹²⁶ See n. 5 above.

¹²⁷ See, e.g., MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 72. Although MacIntyre explicitly distinguishes himself from an “organic-harmonic picture” (see Alasdair MacIntyre, “Once More on Kierkegaard,” in Davenport and Rudd, *Kierkegaard after MacIntyre*, 352), this picture is apparent in his full reconciliation of the interests of the self and its whole. Indeed, several passages from MacIntyre make him serve as White’s leading contemporary figure espousing the “hegelian” model of “Hellenic Harmony” (see White, *Individual and Conflict*, 40, 56, 134, 160, 162, 273–74).

¹²⁸ In a very important passage, MacIntyre argues that in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries humans came to be thought of “as in some dangerous measure egoistic by nature; and it is only once we think of mankind as by nature dangerously egoistic that altruism becomes at once socially necessary and yet apparently impossible. . . . On the traditional Aristotelian view such problems do not arise. For what education in the virtues teaches me is that my good as a man is one and the same as the good of those others with whom I am bound up in human community. There is no way of pursuing my good which is necessarily antagonistic to you pursuing yours because *the* good is neither mine peculiarly nor yours peculiarly—goods are not private property” (*After Virtue*, 229). While rightly pointing out that vicious egoisms are mistaken on their own grounds, MacIntyre revealingly does not mention

seems that such cases should call into question the simple identification of "my good and the good," for if one can at times choose the clear and known subordination of the former to the latter, it would be difficult to distinguish this from the "distinctively moral" motivation spurned by MacIntyre, and such behavior would need to be defended rather than derided.

To this the Aristotelian may appeal to a broader theory of virtue. For we have noted MacIntyre's insistence that the virtuous agent is one who has come to value virtue for its own sake and regardless of negative consequences that may come up in particular cases.¹²⁹ The purpose of proper education and habituation is to lead us from a childish and adolescent state, in which we indeed feel a division and clash between self-regarding and other-regarding inclinations, toward an integrated state in which our "passions and inclinations are directed to what is both our good and the good of others."¹³⁰ Such a person has recognized that she cannot achieve her good without virtues such as "just generosity," since these are required for participation in a flourishing community.¹³¹ Having reasoned from her human good to the need for such virtues, those habits themselves will teach her that finding another in "gross and urgent need" is itself a sufficient reason to meet that need, not requiring reference to the self-interested chain of reasoning.¹³² It is in this context that MacIntyre concludes that self-sacrifice is "as much [a] vice, as much a sign of inadequate moral development, as selfishness."¹³³

whether I might be called to pursue another's good in a way antagonistic to my own; if so, then an egoism-altruism dichotomy would have some place in the moral life.

¹²⁹ See n. 11 above.

¹³⁰ MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 160.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, esp. 108, 119, and n. 128 above.

¹³² MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 159. Compare Gallagher's excellent exposition and defense of Aquinas: "For Thomas, one does not, in loving God and loving other creatures in God as ordered to God, cease loving himself or creatures on other bases. . . . The natural self-love one has for oneself remains; it is part of one's nature. What does happen, however, [is] that this love tends to be less and less actual; that is to say, the person adverts less and less to his good in these terms" (David M. Gallagher, "Thomas Aquinas on Self-Love as the Basis for Love of Others," *Acta Philosophica* 8 [1999]: 43). For an exposition along similar lines but with less direct defense of Aquinas's egoistic foundations, see MacDonald, "Egoistic Rationalism."

¹³³ MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 160. Compare Gallagher: "There seems to be no place for the 'altruism' of the modern sort by which one pursues the interests of another person that are in no way one's own. Rather, for Thomas, one loves and seeks the good of another person only when that other person's good becomes his own. And that good becomes his own precisely when he loves the other person" ("Aquinas on Self-Love," 30, cf. 35). And similarly the Thomist Etienne Gilson: "Loving another with one's whole soul does not mean disowning or sacrificing oneself; it means loving another as oneself, on a basis of perfect equality. . . . All charity for another's person seeks its own good as well. This is self-evident because the definition of love implies desire for a good we want to possess, and if a person

MacIntyre offers here a mature statement of Aristotelian eudaemonism, and I do not expect a decisive refutation of this view would be possible. Nevertheless, it may be instructive that MacIntyre features generosity rather than courage. For it is certainly plausible that Aristotelian sociability can be cultivated to the extent that giving to any particular person without serious hope of recompense could become "second nature" and be seen as contributing to a larger and necessary whole at little if any real cost. But in many instances of courage, even the most well-cultivated individual would recognize the probable clash between common and individual good. MacIntyre's account of how she has come to practice virtue for its own sake could indeed explain, psychologically, why she would choose courageous behavior in such cases; but it is far from clear on what rational, eudaemonistic basis she could justify her action.¹³⁴ Such eudaemonism may provide an adequate foundation for virtues precisely insofar as they incline us toward what is "both our good and the good of others" but is left with ungrounded appeals to the noble, virtue, or the priority of the whole wherever this harmony does not hold.

On the relation of self and other more generally, the non-Aristotelian traditions outlined above seem to offer a number of advantages. Whereas MacIntyre alleges that contrasts between self-interested and altruistic behavior obscure from view the many goods that are genuinely common and "mine insofar as they are also those of others,"¹³⁵ I contend that Kantian duty, Scotist love of justice, and Anselmian recititude do no such thing. They contrast a self-interest qualified and limited by a sincere love of justice with a self-optimization unqualified by such a principle, and such justice is clearly understood as contributing often to harmonious, shared happiness but explains just as well the many cases where irreducibly and seriously painful acts are required. By asserting the "elastic self" relating to "another self" as the sole moral foundation, it is in fact MacIntyre who contracts and ob-

sacrificed himself in favour of the object of his love, he would possess nothing" (*The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, quoted in O'Donovan, *Self-Love in St. Augustine*, 143–44). See also Kelly Rogers's rejection of an altruistic interpretation of Aristotle and endorsement of Aristotle's view that "altruism is unnecessary for virtue" ("Aristotle's Conception of *To Kalon*," in *Aristotle: Critical Assessments*, vol. 3, *Psychology and Ethics*, ed. Lloyd Gerson [London: Routledge, 1999], 350–51).

¹³⁴ Wood (*Kant's Ethical Thought*, 41–42) objects to J. S. Mill's relevantly similar account: "Even if we accept this as a *psychological* explanation of the way people come to value virtue for its own sake, it still provides no satisfactory account of the *value* ascribed to virtue. On the contrary, it encourages the suspicion that like money, virtue really has *no value at all* considered in itself, but is valued *rationally* only when it is valued as a means. . . . Mill even seems to be giving us an *error theory* of valuing virtue for its own sake." Compare Szaif's justification of Aristotle's account of courage ("Aristotle on the Benefits of Virtue," esp. 191).

¹³⁵ MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 19.

scures our moral horizon—teaching us to downplay and reductively explain our independent obligations to the other as other.¹³⁶

Conversely, in seeing the other chiefly as other—more than as a part of my whole—these traditions may be more theoretically equipped to avoid the excessive or unwarranted forms of self-sacrifice to which the Aristotelian tradition has a practical tendency, due to its foundational need to teach every eudaemonistic part its need for, and inferiority to, its whole. For the Kantian or Augustinian, the establishment and maintenance of a stable, decent, functioning state would be seen as a great good, for which certain sacrifices are appropriate;¹³⁷ and acknowledging happiness within moral bounds to be a legitimate motivation, the appeal to one's need for a broader whole can certainly be a motivational factor. But one should limit and qualify considerations of the individual's place as part within any local political whole,¹³⁸ and the

¹³⁶ Kierkegaard offers a relevant example, likely based on his own experience: that true love requires even the man "afire with erotic love" to give up his beloved if this were best for her (Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, trans. H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995], 21, 273–74). Conversely, one may be obligated to faithfully care for someone even when eudaemonistic explanations would ring hollow—as when one's spouse has become fatally and protractedly ill or one has (or is predicted to give birth to) a child with serious defects. Contrast the approach of Aquinas (see n. 133 above) and Gallagher's reasoning in his behalf: "There is no logical inconsistency nor any psychological impossibility in choosing to love another person for his own sake and even more than oneself as what is best for oneself. . . . As Thomas points out . . . , as free beings we must will to will whatever we will. *If we will to seek the good for others, we shall do so because in some way it is better for ourselves. I as an individual must be better off for entering the friendship (e.g., marriage) or the organization or the community than if I do not do so; otherwise it does not seem that I would do so*" ("Aquinas on Self-Love," 42–43, emphasis added). Hare would reply, "But if a good is secondary, although we can indeed pursue it for its own sake, we cannot without self-deception make it central. So if another person's welfare is constitutive of my happiness, but my happiness is central, the commitment I have to that person's welfare is always conditional on its constituting my happiness" ("Scotus on Morality and Nature," 38; cf. *God's Call*, 83–84). So Gallagher may provide an adequate explanation for entering marriage, but he has little justification for remaining in one under the many circumstances in which one's own happiness (most reasonably understood) would point away from the moral reasons for fidelity.

¹³⁷ Compare Höslé's justification (*Morals and Politics*, e.g., 87–88, 627–31) of the state on grounds of its unique moral achievement, rather than its conduciveness to happiness, and Kant on the moral obligation of leaving the state of nature (*MM* 6:312–16; cf. I 8:23, *Toward Perpetual Peace* (PP), in *Practical Philosophy*, 8:349n). For fine discussions of Augustine on the value of the state in upholding a modicum of peace and order, as distinguished from Aristotelian views, see Markus, *Saeculum*, apps. B and C.

¹³⁸ The traditions defended here appeal to the whole-part paradigm most prominently in the metaphysical sphere—concerning the realization that the universe was not created chiefly to serve the interest of the self—rather than in the (morally contingent) political sphere (see n. 30 above; White, *Individual and Conflict*, 286–89). Contrast, for instance, Aquinas's use of Augustine in *ST* II-II 47.10 ad 2 with the original context of the passage, *Confessions* 3.8, 46. The resistance to seeing the part as paradigmatically harmonious within its political whole is partly rooted in Augustine and Kant's idea that humans are naturally social but are in practice "unsociably" so and have strong tendencies against political justice (cf. *City of God* 12.28, 539,

justifiability of any sacrifice should be determined on an independent basis and made psychologically possible and morally obligatory chiefly by the human potential and call to serve each good for its own sake, insofar as it is good.¹³⁹ Such an agent would tend to have clearer vision for asserting the rights of an individual against a community,¹⁴⁰ for compromising her own prospects for happiness in behalf of a more just future community,¹⁴¹ and for recognizing that the claims of the political whole of which her happiness is chiefly a part must themselves be inscribed within the requirements of cosmopolitan justice.¹⁴²

19.5; Deane, *Political and Social Ideas*, chap. 4; Rist, *Augustine*, 291; Kant, I 8:20–21, CB 8:110, 119, TP 8:312, A 7:322–25, R 6:26, PP 8:355, 375n; also contrast Aquinas ST I 96.4 with the original context of the *City of God* passages he cites). See n. 141 below.

¹³⁹ Cf. Kant’s ambivalence about cases of near-certain sacrifice of oneself in saving others from a shipwreck, to preserve one’s country, or to serve the good of humanity, due to the countervailing duty to self-preservation (see CPR 5:158, MM 6:423, A 7:259; cf. the remarks on courage in PP 8:365). The case of political perjury, considered above, is a perfect and essential duty, so self-preservation has no countervailing weight there (CPR 5:158).

¹⁴⁰ Aristotle’s teaching on natural slavery (*Pol.* 1.5–7) and on the justifiability for deviant regimes of ostracizing the innocent (3.13, 1284a3–84b34) should probably not be read as simply external to and easily omitted from his broader theory of the subordination of whole to part (*Pol.* 1.2, 1253a18–28, 8.1, 1337a27–29, *NE* 1.2, 1094b7–12). For example, he argues for the ideality of an enslaved farming class (*Pol.* 7.10, 1330a24–24), and he assumes a naïve degree of harmony of interest in parental and master relations (see *NE* 5.6, 1134b9–12, cf. *Pol.* 3.6, 1278b33–37, 1.6, 1255b11–15). Richard Kraut (*Aristotle: Political Philosophy* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002], chap. 7) offers a sympathetic reading of Aristotle on civic priority that concludes: “Should circumstances require an individual to choose between the good of his household or his own good and that of the larger political community to which he belongs, it is the latter that must be given priority. . . . No doubt he is right that a single part of the body should be sacrificed to save the whole” (275–76, cf. 266, 270–71). The problem, as Kraut’s agreeable treatment of ostracism (272, cf. 273) also suggests, is that this principle appeals to warranted cases of individual sacrifice without capacity to distinguish them from, for example, sweeping property confiscations or false convictions (reasonably) made in behalf of deterrence or public safety.

¹⁴¹ If service of the common good is based on perceiving and experiencing it as harmonious with one’s own good, pursuits of the common good that are likely to bring rejection, scorn, threats and even violence will appear unnatural and irrational. This may be linked with the Aristotelian tendency to assume the fundamental goodness of one’s given community—note, for instance, his strong respect for the *endoxa* (e.g., the “majority rules” standard of the good at *Rhetoric* 1.7, 1364b38–65a2), his close association of well-being with the stability and maintenance of the established regime (*Rhetoric* 1.8, 1365b25–26, cf. *Pol.* 4–5), and the extent to which he defines virtue and justice in terms of existing laws, presupposed to be basically just, rather than by a higher, separate concept of justice (*NE* 5, e.g., 1129b14–19, 1130b22–27; cf. *Pol.* 3.4; C. C. W. Taylor, “Ethics and Politics in Aristotle: A Discussion of Richard Kraut, *Aristotle*,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 23 [2002]: 269, 273).

¹⁴² Although MacIntyre on occasion comes close to acknowledging a universalistic concept of rights (*Three Rival Versions*, 76, *Whose Justice?* 146, Alasdair MacIntyre, “Is Patriotism a Virtue?” in *Patriotism*, ed. Igor Primoratz [Amherst, MA: Humanity, 2002], 54), for the most part he is concerned with undermining the universalistic cosmopolitanism characteristic of liberal modernity and the disengaged reason linked with it (see Alasdair MacIntyre, “A Partial Response to My Critics,” in Horton and Mendus, *After MacIntyre*, 286–89, *Whose Justice?* 3–4, and esp. “Is Patriotism a Virtue?”). This would constitute a grave ethical regress insofar as Aristotle’s

III. CONCLUSION

I hope to have offered the broad outlines of a tradition that since Plato has tapped into various insights—such as the nature of love and the fundamental contrast between moral dedication and self-interested calculation—that would develop, at the latest with Anselm, into an independent foundation of ethics. This was in part the result of a moral ethos of divine commands, but it was also the natural product of examining test cases of pursuing virtue for its own sake. These cases showed, on the one hand, the tragic yet evident implausibility of strictly identifying virtuous behavior with happiness (as was attempted in certain strands of Plato and Aristotle and in the Stoics consistently).¹⁴³ On the other hand, there was found to be an undue exclusion of pagan virtues, as well as a certain reductive ignobility, in primarily focusing upon divine compensation for virtue's misfortunes (as was attempted in Augustine predominately).¹⁴⁴ But by formulating ethical systems in which happiness was fundamental yet subordinated to a higher dedication, these thinkers avoided the crippling Aristotelian commitment to the full harmonization of happiness with virtue. For the latter commitment quite naturally gives rise to a reduction of Aristotle's noble prescriptions in order to shield each individual's happiness, or to superficial underacknowledgement of the many virtuous activities and social situations in which such harmony does not hold,¹⁴⁵ or to some such acknowledgment combined with a prescription that one follow one's virtuous habits even when reflection would show that they are contrary to self-interest—the sole avowed rational foundation of the moral life.¹⁴⁶ Far better that people be taught to develop a ground-level realization that their self and its happiness are not the true center of the moral universe¹⁴⁷ and that to show dedication and even love to some other or greater reality—tragically but especially when self-interested justifications are unsound, convoluted, or require a “noble risk”

frighteningly inhumane views on just warfare (see *Pol.* 7.2, 1324b32–41, 7.14, 1333b38–34a2, cf. 1.5–7, esp. 1255b37–39) may be seen as a natural outgrowth of an ethic primarily or exclusively based on seeking happiness for the self and the whole to which it is linked.

¹⁴³ See the above nn. 22 for Plato, 118 for Aristotle, and esp. 34 for the Stoics.

¹⁴⁴ Motivational purity has not been our focus here, but see nn. 122, 132, 133, and 136 above for Aquinas on motivation, which parallel what is questionable in Augustine in n. 39; contrast nn. 31, 48, 73, and esp. 121.

¹⁴⁵ I think here of Aristotle's insistence on luck and wealth over a whole life as necessary for happiness, as well as his treatment of courage. For a criticism of the Aristotelian and Thomistic explaining away of altruism, see esp. n. 136 above.

¹⁴⁶ See n. 134 above. The underlying problem is the Aristotelian's justification of virtue in terms of happiness, while avoiding the amendment of commonsense virtue in view of experienced happiness by claiming interest only in the happiness of the good person (cf. Höhle, *Morals and Politics*, 16).

¹⁴⁷ See nn. 30, 142, and esp. 138 above.

of faith—reflects its own rationality, of which the philosophical egoist knows only imitations. The rational justification of such a principle may take many forms,¹⁴⁸ and I have focused here on the similar structures and convictions of Kant, Plato, and the Augustinians rather than on their evidently differing foundations.¹⁴⁹ Whether ultimately superior to Aristotelianism in these respects or not, these related traditions pursue appealing alternatives to neo-Aristotelian dichotomies of either exclusively eudaemonistic foundations or the eclipsing of happiness and virtue.

¹⁴⁸ Rist’s Augustinian Platonism appeals to divine and psychological realities to answer the egoist while not attempting to base all moral norms directly on self-interest (see *Real Ethics* and n. 31 above); Hare’s Scotism and Christianizing Kantianism pursue a similar objective (see *God’s Call*, esp. chap. 2, and *Moral Gap*, esp. chap. 3). Höhle’s Platonic reading of Kantian reason, by contrast, would appeal to divine rationality and transcendental, performative reason without foundational appeal to self-interest (see *Objective Idealism*, chaps. 1–3; *Morals and Politics*, 89–92, 153–55). For Annas, as well as most contemporary Kantians, human reason is independently sufficient to ground objective moral norms. All these approaches, it is true, require more difficult grounding than pure eudaemonism, but if (as this essay contends) human ethical requirements and moral freedom are not best explained eudaemonistically, then these more difficult foundations are worth seeking—or at least respecting.

¹⁴⁹ For observations on Kant’s differences from Plato and the Augustinians, particularly on matters of religion and moral motivation, see the above nn. 14, 35, 48, and esp. 40.

Is the Bible a Jewish Book? On the Literary Character of Biblical Narrative in the Thought of Franz Rosenzweig and Leo Strauss*

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INTRODUCTION

A number of important modern Jewish thinkers can be said to have been not only builders and reshapers of philosophical systems, or representatives of the intellectual and cultural ethos of their times, but also interpreters of the Bible who were intensely concerned with the problem of the Bible's status and authority in the modern age.¹ Begin-

* This essay began as a lecture at a conference commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Nechama Liebowitz, held at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem in January 2006. I am grateful to the Department of Near Eastern and Jewish Studies (NEJS) and to the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education at Brandeis University, which generously provided me with the academic environment and facilities that allowed me to research and compose the essay as it has emerged in this form. I owe a special vote of thanks to Marc Brettler and Eugene Sheppard of NEJS, who offered helpful comments regarding the theme of the essay, as well as to Sharon Fieman-Nemser, who provided an opportunity for me to deliver an earlier version of it as a lecture to the staff of the Mandel Center and thereby to sharpen and focus my formulations. Thanks also to the anonymous reviewers enlisted by the *Journal of Religion* for insightful comments that aided in the clarification of some important issues.

¹ I have learned much of relevance from a recent article by my distinguished colleague, Ehud Luz of Haifa University, called "How to Read the Bible according to Leo Strauss," which appeared in *Modern Judaism* 25, no. 3 (2005): 264–84. My esteemed teacher at the Jewish Thought Department of the Hebrew University, Eliezer Schweid, in an article entitled "Franz Rosenzweig as Philosophical Interpreter of the Bible," in Shmuel Ettinger, Yitzchak Gilat, and Shmuel Safrai, eds., *Milet: Everyman's University Studies in Jewish History and Culture* (Tel-Aviv: Open University, 1983), 299–322, has written thoroughly and profoundly on Rosenzweig as a biblical interpreter. He attributes a methodological hierarchy to Rosenzweig, one that begins with the historical-philological dimension, moves on to the literary dimension, and finally arrives at what he regards as the most significant hermeneutic dimension for understanding Rosenzweig's contribution as a Bible interpreter: the midrashic-grammatical dimension. While this dimension is certainly crucial for understanding Rosenzweig's biblical hermeneutics, I believe that the literary dimension—that which analyzes the use of words and structure within

ning with the seventeenth century, we need only recall Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise*—a tractate that includes a systematic discussion of the history and literary character of the Bible, a treatment of what he regarded as the proper approach to its interpretation, and numerous commentaries on biblical passages. As is well known, Spinoza, in opposition to Maimonides, did not believe that the Bible was in any way a book of philosophy and at best could be considered the repository of a socially beneficial morality. He considered the legal portions of the Bible to be devoid of any authority, owing to the dissolution of the ancient Israelite state.² Mendelssohn, in his eighteenth-century work *Jerusalem*, also denied that the Bible was a philosophical-metaphysical work, but this was not considered by him to be a defect.³ For Mendelssohn, the Bible assumes certain basic, universal religious intuitions concerning God's relationship to the world and his creatures, without giving them explicit theological formulation. Mendelssohn regarded the Bible chiefly as a legal writing, with its commandments eternally binding on the conscience of individual Jews until God should see fit to cancel or revise the revelation at Sinai.⁴ Mendelssohn, as is well known, also wrote a comprehensive commentary on the Bible called the *Be'ur*.⁵ Moving to the nineteenth century, Samuel David Luzzato was another one of those thinkers who could be referred to as a "reflective interpreter" of the Bible. Within the framework of his commentary on the Pentateuch, he gave explicit attention to the question of the character and authority of the biblical text.⁶ Writing in a post-Kantian and somewhat pragmatic vein, he continued the tradition that

the context of a single narrative, or set of related narratives—is no less important as a carrier of Rosenzweig's existential-dialogical understanding of the Bible, as I hope will become clear in what follows. Michael Fishbane, in his *Garments of Torah* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), has also emphasized the grammatical character of Rosenzweig's readings of Scripture in a most instructive chapter entitled "Speech and Scripture: The Grammatical Thinking and Theology of Franz Rosenzweig" (99–111). He has insightfully commented that, for Rosenzweig, the Bible's "'literary' forms always serve dialogical ends" (106). This principle has guided me in my own readings, yet it could be that the means-ends framework (literary form as means, dialogical speech and meaning as the end) should be refined somewhat. It seems that for Rosenzweig, form and content in the Bible are so organically intertwined and interdependent that one could not be said to be a means to the other.

² See Baruch Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, Gebhardt ed., trans. Samuel Shirley (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 75, 78–79, 88–100, 140–60.

³ See Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem*, trans. Allan Arkush (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1983), 94.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 89–97, 132–34.

⁵ Mendelssohn's *Be'ur*, or explanation, was integrated into an edition of the Pentateuch called *Netivot Shalom: Be'ur R. Moshe Mendelssohn Al HaTorah* (Vienna: Druck und Verlag von Adalbert della Torre, 1846; repr., Jerusalem, 1974).

⁶ See Samuel David Luzzato's *Commentary to the Pentateuch* (Tel-Aviv: Dvir, 1965), in particular, his commentary on Gen. 1:1, 3–4.

advised readers of the Bible not to come to it with philosophical or metaphysical expectations. The purpose of the Bible, in Luzzato's view, was not to present the theoretical truth about God or the world—such a truth could never be formulated or communicated in an “objective” manner. The Bible is a book written for all types of people, not only for philosophers (in this Luzzato follows Mendelssohn), and its purpose (and here he parts with Mendelssohn) is to teach those kinds of beliefs about God and the world that would truly motivate people to moral behavior—beliefs such as the unity of the world and of mankind, the providential rewarding of the good, and so forth.⁷

As we come to the beginning of the twentieth century, Hermann Cohen's *Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism*,⁸ while not a running commentary, nonetheless presents itself as clarifying some of its central concepts by way of an interpretation of selected biblical passages. Cohen believed that in analyzing the biblical text as a “source,” one could trace the growth of some of the most important concepts of moral philosophy, leading, for example, from the “stranger-sojourner” to the “citizen” to the “son of Noah” and eventually to the prophetic, messianic conception of the ultimate unity of mankind.⁹ Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig undertook, as is well known, a comprehensive translation of the Bible into German, producing, in the course of their collaboration, a series of theoretical essays on the hermeneutic principles employed in their work, as well as on the problems raised by modern biblical scholarship for those who would still regard themselves as adherents of the Bible.¹⁰ Many of Leo Strauss's early writings bespeak an overriding concern with the root assumptions of biblical criticism as founded and articulated by Spinoza.¹¹ Strauss returns to the theme of the literary character of the Bible and the hermeneutic principles upon which its interpretation should be predicated in a number of later writings (and readings) as well, particularly “On the Interpretation of Genesis” and “Jerusalem and Athens.”¹²

⁷ See also Samuel David Luzzato, *Yesode HaTorah* (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1947), 25–38.

⁸ Hermann Cohen's original work *Die Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums* was published posthumously by Gustav Fock in Leipzig in 1919. The English edition (*Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism*) was translated and introduced by Simon Caplan, with an additional introduction by Leo Strauss (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1972).

⁹ Cohen, *Religion of Reason*, 1–4, 113–43, 236–68.

¹⁰ These essays, by Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, in English translation, have been collected in a volume entitled *Scripture and Translation*, ed. and trans. Lawrence Rosenwald and Everett Fox (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

¹¹ See Michael Zank, ed. and trans., *Leo Strauss: The Early Writings (1921–1932)* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), 130–200.

¹² Both appear in Kenneth Hart Green's excellent edited collection of selected essays by

As I first learned from my teacher, Eliezer Schweid, the questions addressed by Spinoza to traditional Jewish religious assumptions provided much grist for the mill of subsequent modern Jewish thought, and the challenges that he posed could not be ignored. This was true also regarding the question of the literary character of the Bible. Spinoza and other Bible critics seemed to have shown that the Bible was not much of a “book” at all and that many of the components of the Bible could not be considered books, either. If by “books” we mean coherent works written by a single author, then the composite, often disjunctive compilations known as biblical books would certainly not qualify.¹³ Further, not only might the Bible not qualify as a book; it might not be possible to categorize it as a Hebrew or Jewish writing either, whether a book or not. The historical-philological study of the text seemed to lead to the conclusion that the Bible did not contain a uniquely Jewish message that could be shown to have originated exclusively within the provenance of a discrete and continuous Jewish tradition. The ancient biblical writers were revealed to have been so profoundly influenced in both form and content by their Near Eastern surroundings that it became difficult to see what the “Jewish uniqueness” of the Bible could conceivably be.¹⁴ These, of course, were not, and are not, questions of mere historical or literary interest. It is difficult to see how the Bible can make a normative claim on the modern Jew if it cannot be shown to comprise some coherent message, or at least some related range of messages, one that could be understood as specifically Jewish in some determinate way.

In the following essay, I compare the views of Franz Rosenzweig and Leo Strauss on the question of what Strauss liked to call the “literary character” of the Bible,¹⁵ or, perhaps less audaciously, the literary character of representative biblical narratives. As we shall see, Rosenzweig and Strauss each proposed some remarkable conceptions of what a book, as a human work, could be considered to be. They also had some very original ideas on the question of what makes a book a Jewish

Leo Strauss entitled *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 359–405.

¹³ Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, 173–76.

¹⁴ An illustrative example of this kind of scholarship can be found in the study by Theodore Mullen, *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980), wherein it is shown that the Hebrew conception of *Adat El* was crucially influenced by Canaanite traditions concerning a “divine council” led by a “high god.”

¹⁵ The phrase “literary character of the Bible” is used by Strauss in his written lectures entitled “Progress or Return,” in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 120. He also uses the term in the title of an article called “The Literary Character of the Guide for the Perplexed” and at the beginning of his article, “The Law of Reason in the Kuzari,” both appearing in his well-known collection, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1952), 38–142.

book, and on the Jewishness of certain portions of the Bible. Hopefully, it will become apparent in what follows that a comparison of the reflections of these two thinkers can contribute much to an understanding of the uniqueness of each of their respective approaches to these questions.

It should be noted that this essay is written as a study in modern Jewish thought and makes no claims to determine the literary character of the Bible narrative per se. I hope, in the following pages, to shed some light on the perspectives of two major modern Jewish thinkers concerning what they regarded as certain fundamental insights of the biblical vision as conveyed by what they regarded as typical features of its literary form.

As is well known, Bible scholars differ greatly concerning the possibility of attributing “coherence” or “unity” to biblical narrative—whether we focus on the Jewish canon, the Pentateuch, or even selected narratives within the biblical corpus. John Barton, for example, is of the opinion that most of the biblical writings and compilations, while called in Hebrew *sepharim* (meaning scrolls), cannot really be considered books in the “modern” literary sense of the term.¹⁶ The paradigm of the coherent “work,” with a beginning, middle, and end, and with integral form-content interrelations, was not, in his view, a literary ideal in biblical times and places. For this reason, the criterion of “coherence” should not be used as a touchstone for the interpretation of biblical texts, whether by “synchronic” scholars, who wish to show how seemingly disparate texts “actually” form a coherent literary unit, or by “diachronic” scholars, who wish to demonstrate plural authorship on the basis of a supposed lack of coherence. Marc Brettler disagrees with Barton and allows that biblical writers, compilers, and redactors did sometimes aspire to coherence of theme, chronology, and character in their successive compositions, compilations, and canonizations—whether by way of connecting phrases, repetition of plot elements, recurring word refrains, or other means.¹⁷ This attempt, how-

¹⁶ See John Barton’s essay, “What Is a Book?” in *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel*, ed. Johannes DeMoor (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1–14.

¹⁷ Marc Brettler’s position on this can be found systematically formulated and applied by way of an analysis of Judges and Song of Songs in a piece called “Coherence in the Bible” (unpublished lecture delivered at the fourteenth World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem in 2005). I wish to offer my thanks to Brettler for making this essay available to me. I also learned a great deal in discussion with Ed Greenstein of Bar-Ilan University, who expressed the opinion that among the scribes of the ancient Near East, including the biblical scribes, there did not exist an explicit, systematic poetics. There were, however, literary forms and conventions that the scribes learned to imitate, and there might very well have been something of an “implicit poetics” in some cases. For an example of the possibility of reading the same

ever, to lend coherence to, say, the Judges sequence or the Song of Songs anthology should not be confused with the concept of literary “unity,” which, for Brettler, reflects the reader’s penchant for holism and harmony and is not to be regarded as a property of the biblical text or as an ideal of its authors. In contradistinction to both of these, we have Robert Alter’s well-known thesis that while certainly not all biblical narratives give evidence of having been “coherently” composed by writers practicing a “profound art,” certainly some biblical stories and story sequences can be seen as works that reflect a real unity of form and content. In Alter’s words, certain biblical narratives reveal a “complete interfusion of literary art with theological, moral or historical vision—the fullest perception of the latter dependent on the fullest grasp of the former.”¹⁸

I do not presume to resolve this continuing dispute between Bible scholars. I rather hope to gain some insight into the manner in which two great modern Jewish thinkers have sought to orient modern readers, both Jewish and non-Jewish, to the Bible, with the explicit intention of enhancing its prestige and stature in their eyes. For Rosenzweig and Strauss, this project apparently involved the demonstration of a high degree of form-content integrity in the narratives they chose to interpret. Rosenzweig famously believed that however composite and “incoherent” the Bible may have been during the process of its composition, the Redactor, whom he chose to call Rabbenu (our teacher), ultimately wove the writings that he received into a corpus that is “the work of a single mind.”¹⁹ Strauss, while not taking “issue with the findings and even the premises of biblical criticism,” was willing to admit that the Bible may be composed of layers that represent “memories of ancient histories” and even “memories of memories.” What he was not willing to admit was that the “latest and uppermost layer” of these “memories of memories” necessarily presents us with “distorting or pale reflections of the original.” On the contrary, he thought they may actually represent “deepenings, through meditation, of the primary experiences.” For this reason, he was willing to construct his interpretation on the basis of a literary-theological reading of the “uppermost

biblical text both coherently and incoherently, see Greenstein’s fascinating essay, “Presenting Genesis 1—Constructively and Deconstructively,” in *Prooftexts* 21, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 1–22.

¹⁸ The quote is from Robert Alter’s well-known *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic, 1981), 19.

¹⁹ See Franz Rosenzweig’s letter to the leader of German Neo-Orthodoxy, Jacob Rosenheim (written in 1927 and published in the journal *Der Morgen* in 1928), entitled “The Unity of the Bible,” and included in Buber and Rosenzweig, *Scripture and Translation*, 22–25.

layer . . . what is first for us, even though it may not be the first simply."²⁰

Before beginning the analyses of Rosenzweig's and Strauss's conceptions of the literary character of biblical narrative, with reference to the question of whether or not the Bible, or certain works within it, should be regarded as Jewish books, I offer a brief comment on what the adjective "Jewish" is meant to convey in this connection. First of all, the attribution "Jewish" most certainly does not come to establish the ethnic or sectarian Jewishness of the biblical authors. If this were the case, the title should have begun, "Is the Bible a Book by Jews?" or, better, "a book by Hebrews" or "Israelites." It would also seem strange to maintain that books, in and of themselves, are possessed of a self-conscious ethnic or sectarian identity. A "Jewish book" in this connection means a book that is believed by someone to express its typically Jewish or Hebrew worldview by way of what he/she regards as typically Jewish literary features. For Rosenzweig, as we shall see in detail below, this has to do with the weaving of dynamic, "dialogical-revelational" moments of meaning into what ultimately remains, despite these apparent dissonances, a coherent, artful text possessed of what he regards as "epic unity." For Strauss, it has to do with a coherent message communicated by way of the Bible's very "incoherence" and composite character. The biblical editors did not conceive of themselves as sovereign authors who had constructed an "original," harmonious philosophic truth-system. According to Strauss, they saw themselves, much like the later, extra-biblical exegetes, as custodians of and ministers to a preexisting divine truth embedded in received writings. The "bumps" and contradictions in the writings they received were preserved, revered, and interpreted as secrets (rather than as evidence of an undeveloped reason), embodying and reflecting the mysterious character of God and his Creation. A "Jewish writing," then, for Strauss, is a writing that is cast in the literary form of a commentary on the received—"always referring back to something earlier," rather than in the form of a sovereign work of philosophy or literature.²¹

²⁰ The quotations are from Leo Strauss's "Jerusalem and Athens," in his *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 381–82.

²¹ For the reasons mentioned, neither Strauss nor Rosenzweig regarded Rosenzweig's *The Star of Redemption*, trans. William Hallo (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1985), as a Jewish book but, rather, as a system of philosophy. See Franz Rosenzweig, "The New Thinking: A Few Supplementary Remarks to the *Star*," in his *The New Thinking*, ed. Alan Udoff and Barbara Galli (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 68–69; and Leo Strauss, "Preface to Spinoza's *Critique of Religion*," in his *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 151. By virtue of the same criteria, Strauss did not regard Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed* as a philosophic book. Since it was presented as having been written by an "adherent of the law" in contradistinction to a "philosopher," and since it was a "book devoted to the expla-

Nonetheless, as we shall see, some of these Jewish writings did, according to Strauss, in the course of time, take on the attributes of "books" or "works," if only in order to formulate their own pious perspective as a cogent alternative to that of the sovereign book writers.

In what follows, I focus on certain themes that will serve as a basis for a comparison between the two thinkers. For example, it will emerge that both Rosenzweig and Strauss viewed the Bible, or certain portions of it, as a kind of microcosm. However, as I shall articulate below, they conceived of the "cosmos" meant to serve as the model for the biblical microcosm in very different ways. As we have already noted, each saw biblical narrative as deliberately presenting, by way of the manner of its composition, a discrete vision of the world and of human life. They differed profoundly, however, concerning what they perceived to be the relationship of this Hebrew or Jewish perspective to what they regarded as a Greek or Western perspective. Finally, for both Rosenzweig and Strauss, an important key to understanding the biblical vision had to do with what they regarded as the positive, not negative, role of contradictions in the biblical text.

FRANZ ROSENZWEIG ON THE LITERARY CHARACTER OF BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

Rosenzweig, in his thinking about the Bible, had no reservations about presenting himself as a "believer"—one for whom the revelation of God's love and the creation of the world as a manifestation of God's will and wisdom were not merely tenets of theological doctrine but matters of personal experience. One could say, as Guttman did, that, for Rosenzweig, individual religious experience took the place of independent rational thinking as the validating ground for the claims of religious tradition. The role that autonomous reason played in traditional philosophy was taken up by autonomous experience.²² Con-

nation of the secret teaching of the Bible," it should be regarded not as a "philosophic book" but as a commentary, that form of writing "favored in the Jewish tradition." See Leo Strauss, "The Literary Character of the Guide for the Perplexed," esp. 40–50, and "Progress or Return," 120. For an additional, penetrating understanding of commentary as the "Jewish" mode of writing par excellence, in keeping with a discrete "Jewish" conception of truth, see Gershom Scholem, "Revelation and Tradition as Categories in Judaism," in his *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1971), in particular, 282–92. On 289, Scholem, very much in Strauss's spirit, writes as follows: "[In rabbinic Judaism] the effort of the seeker after truth consists not in having new ideas but in subordinating himself to the continuity of the tradition of the divine word and in laying open what he receives from it in the context of his own time. In other words: Not system but commentary is the legitimate form through which truth is approached."

²² See Julius Guttman, *Philosophies of Judaism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1964), 369–72.

versely and dialectically, however, Rosenzweig also looked for “objective” and “historical” confirmation of his own experience in the experiences reflected and refracted in what had become his people’s sacred texts.²³ He certainly did not view his religious experience as idiosyncratic or arbitrary but as essentially available to all human beings who hold themselves open to it and do not arbitrarily close themselves off to it. As far as Rosenzweig was concerned, the experience of relationship with God could be and should be part of the immediate, empirical horizon of every human being. He called such an orientation “absolute empiricism” and maintained that a realm of experience that excluded God from its horizon was just as empirically stunted as one that arbitrarily excluded man or the world.²⁴

Rosenzweig’s understanding of the Bible as microcosm, then, was grounded in a relational experience that was expressed in a relational theology. Rosenzweig saw certain aspects of human life as reflective of and correlative with certain aspects of the divine life and vice versa. On the one hand, as he wrote in *The Star of Redemption*, “man loves as God loves and because God loves.”²⁵ On the other hand, a phenomenology of the human love-experience can form the basis for an understanding of the love relation between God and man. From the human point of view, the experience of “revelation,” of the turning of God to the human individual in loving confirmation, precedes the experience of “creation,”²⁶ namely, the sense of the ever-recurring renewal of the lawfulness of the cosmos as an expression of God’s loving will and wisdom, as a “work of art” bestowed as a gift. In terms of the motion of the divine life, however, God relates first to the cosmos indirectly in a kind of prerevelation, his loving immediacy hidden behind the completed wholeness and “objective pastness” of the world order. Only “later” does He turn to the human individual directly.²⁷

²³ See Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, for the grounding of the historicity and objectivity of the present personal experience in Rosenzweig’s thought, 183–84. See also 198, where Rosenzweig says, “if language is more than only an analogy, if it is truly analogue—and therefore more than analogue—then that which we hear as a living word in our I and which resounds toward us out of our Thou must also be ‘as it is written’ in that great historical testament of revelation whose essentiality we recognize precisely from the presentness of our experience. Once more we seek the word of man in the word of God.”

²⁴ See Rosenzweig, “The New Thinking,” particularly 101–2.

²⁵ Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, 199.

²⁶ Ibid., 186: “As act, creation was founded, and as result it climaxed, in the past. To this tense there here corresponds in dominant fashion the present, indeed it is being present itself. Revelation too looks back into the past at that moment at which it would like to give its presentness the form of a predicate. But the past only becomes visible to revelation when and as revelation shines into it with the light of the present. Only in this backward glance does the past prove to be the base and prediction of the present experience.”

²⁷ Ibid., 160–62.

Since humans have been created “in the image of God,” there are, according to Rosenzweig, certain parallels between aspects of human experience and divine experience. There are correlates to God’s creating and loving in human creating and loving, and in human creating with love.²⁸ It is at this juncture that the connection between the “work” of creation and the creation of human “works” comes to light. From a theological point of view, God has created the world as a comprehensive cosmic system. From an aesthetic point of view, human beings also create works that can be considered as whole—works that have an internal lawfulness that bespeaks intention and wisdom. Human works, then, can be regarded as a kind of microcosm of the patterns of God’s creation.

A good work of art, whether plastic, literary, or musical, is a whole with a plan. The plan, namely, the idea, vision, or sensibility that informs the details of the work and is mounted by way of the details of the work—giving the work its characteristic borders, texture, and quality—can sometimes be surveyed, particularly in the plastic arts, in one panoramic view (think of a statue, for example). This panoramic perspective, the contemplation of the work as a whole—taking note of the connection between the plan of the work and its execution by way of various details and devices—is called by Rosenzweig the epic dimension of the work of art.²⁹

Literary works of art, books, or stories, can also be seen as microcosmic in the way described above. The epic dimension of a story is that aspect of the story that presents it as a defined whole with an overarching conception, clear borders, and identifiable modes of expression integrally tied to a discrete vision. This vision, or conception, is expressed in all the details of the literary composition and is in turn constructed and supported by these details. One can follow this dimension of the story by paying careful attention to such features as the repetition of words or phrases (with or without variations), the recurrence of plot elements (again, with or without variations), the deployment and interrelation of the characters, the structure of the narrative, and so forth. This epic dimension in human works is related,

²⁸ Ibid., 192: “Human integrity pours its loving overabundance into the work without limitation or qualms. . . . Not that the originator loses himself in his opus—not at all—but man as multiple integer sacrifices his integrity and his occlusion and, unmindful of self, immerses in the dormant material until the marble comes to life. . . . The opus comes to life in the very love of man.”

²⁹ Ibid., 193–94. See also Rosenzweig’s essay, “The Secret of Biblical Narrative Form,” in Buber and Rosenzweig, *Scripture and Translation*, esp. 132–35, 139–40, 142.

then, to the dimension of creation that we perceive in the world when we attend to the wondrous order and lawfulness we find in it.³⁰

There is another aesthetic dimension in human "works," however, that corresponds to the experience of revelation, rather than to that of creation. This dimension is termed by Rosenzweig the "lyric" dimension.³¹ First, some very brief and incomplete remarks on the experience of revelation as Rosenzweig testifies to it. Before the experience of revelation, the human being feels self-enclosed, the world is perceived as a self-enclosed impersonal cosmic system, and God cannot be conceived otherwise than as a transcendently self-enclosed and self-sufficient Being. Yet, the human being feels that his/her self-enclosure is not as it should be. He/she feels existentially inadequate, unloved, unlovable, and unable to love other human beings. He/she is filled with remorse and shame at being this way, hiding "bashfully" from the divine presence. At some point the human being strongly disavows his/her self-enclosure and cries out, "I have sinned." At this point, God, in a fleeting and unrepeatable address that takes place only in the fullness of the present, turns to the human being and communicates to him/her, "I have called you by name, you are precious to me, you are my very own, I love you, love me in return." The joyous human being, sensing God's love and confirmation, basks in this love and flourishes in it. He/she feels dear to God, and this gives him/her a sense of existential and ontological worth. The human being now has the spiritual wherewithal to turn to other human beings and to bestow the same love and confirmation on them as was bestowed upon him/her. The command of the lover to the beloved, "love me," begets a response from a human being who now feels mature and adequate enough not to remain fixated in a "mystical" absorption in God's love but to go out into the world and love other human beings as well.³²

Moving again from theology to aesthetics, works of art, microcosmically, reflect the dimension of revelation as they do the dimension of creation. This lyric dimension is most typically perceived not in the plastic arts but in music.³³ The musical work is rarely perceived in its totality, at a glance; rather, it moves along gradually in time. Now the

³⁰ Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, 148–50, 192–95; Buber and Rosenzweig, *Scripture and Translation*, 135.

³¹ Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, 194–95.

³² *Ibid.*, 162–64, 167–71, 177–84, 205–15.

³³ For Rosenzweig's discussion of rhythm and harmony in music, see *ibid.*, 197–99. With regard to the lyric moment of harmony in music, Rosenzweig writes, "the individual moment of the work of music is harmonically inspired with the whole depth of a pitch of its own which, as moment and for the moment, appears to make it wholly independent of the rhythmic whole" (198).

lyric orientation does not look to the “wholeness” of the work as reflected, say, in its themes, variations, structure, and so forth. It does not focus on patterns and devices that repeat themselves, or rework themselves. The lyric moment in music, or poetry, is a singular, unrepeatable, uncontrollable moment when a certain quality of sound or configuration of words seems to stop time in its tracks ever so briefly. At that instant, some very individual chord is touched in the listener or reader. The listener feels that the work of art as performed at that particular moment, or the poem as read by a certain person at a certain time, is, to use the words of a by-now-not-so-current popular ballad, “singing her life with his song.” Something about this particular, momentary sound complex touches a nerve, poses a question, answers a dormant or latent question—and by so doing shakes the listener to her very being in a way that is not always expressible. The text, or score, is no longer a mere weave of words or notes; it has become transformed into a voice revealing itself directly to the listener, leading her also to reveal herself—perhaps first of all to herself and then possibly, if the performance does not remain a mere aesthetic experience, to others as well. A fundamental life question has been opened up, and a response is called for.

With regard to literature, and most particularly with regard to the story, Rosenzweig calls this moment an “anecdotal” moment.³⁴ This term, for Rosenzweig, does not connote mere casual or incidental storytelling. Rather, it refers to the primordial storytelling situation, when someone breathlessly runs in to recount an event of supreme importance that has “just” occurred, something that affects the life of both the storyteller and the listener such that the course of both of their lives can never be the same again.

Let us then apply some of these Rosenzweigian categories to the biblical story. To be sure, Rosenzweig viewed biblical stories as “human” works, yet he did not think they were any less divine for that.³⁵ Since, for Rosenzweig, as I said, there is a correlation between divine creation and self-revelation and the human capacity for creation and self-revelation, both in the world and in art, the distinction between the so-called divine origin and the so-called human origin of the text loses its significance. God creates and speaks in and through human creations and speakings. The Bible, however, is unique among such crea-

³⁴ Buber and Rosenzweig, *Scripture and Translation*, 133–34.

³⁵ For Rosenzweig’s complex, nondichotomous conception of the both “divine” and “human” character of the commandments in the Bible, see his remarks in “The Commandments Divine or Human,” in *On Jewish Learning*, ed. Nachum Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1955), 119–24.

tions and speakings for having opened up the revelational, “anecdotal,” dialogical dimension for so many individuals and communities, both Jewish and Christian, in the Western world. This is testified to by the fact that great numbers of people, including many antagonists, have been, and continue to be, dialogically engaged with it.³⁶

Rosenzweig believed, and believed that he and Buber had demonstrated, that certain biblical narratives do indeed respond to careful literary analysis and can be read as good art or good literature. This does not mean that he thought that the whole Bible, or the Bible as a whole, should be considered a work of consummate aesthetic beauty. He writes explicitly that “the Bible is not the most beautiful book in the world.”³⁷ Nonetheless, he felt that in certain biblical stories, the connections between form and content are intricately and elaborately worked out. In texts like this, it is impossible to detach what the biblical text communicates from the manner and form by which it is communicated. Certain biblical stories “hang together”; the details and devices, word deployment and repetition, appellations, plot structures, characterizations and foils, and so forth, all corroborate and promote the overall message, experience, vision, or sensibility that arises out of the text. While these biblical narratives are parsimonious with words and effects, just about everything used in them is “inner required” for their purpose.³⁸

In the above sense, biblical stories have an “epic” quality about them. They are “wholes” with conceptions that work themselves out in the details. Often, however, certain stories will also contain a lyrical, anecdotal, or dialogical element in the very thick of the narrative, without affecting their epic wholeness and narrative unity. This is brought

³⁶ Rosenzweig, “The Secret of Biblical Narrative Form,” 140. On this issue of the uniqueness of the Bible, Rosenzweig writes, “The Bible’s uniqueness is to be demonstrated irrefutably with respect not to the book as written but to the book as read. The Bible is not the most beautiful book in the world, not the deepest, the truest, the wisest, the most absorbing, not any of the ordinary superlatives—or at least we cannot impose any of these superlatives upon anyone not already predisposed in their favor. But the Bible is the most important book. That much can be proven; and even the most fanatical Bible-hater must acknowledge as much, at least for the past—indeed his fanatical hatred acknowledges as much for the present as well. What is at issue is not a question of personal taste or spiritual disposition or intellectual orientation, but a question of transpired history.”

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 140.

³⁸ The parsimoniousness of description in biblical narrative is classically portrayed in Erich Auerbach’s *Mimesis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 7–23. The felicitous word “inner-requirement” I learned from John Ciardi’s book, *How Does a Poem Mean?* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1975), 108. It should also be noted in this connection that Buber and Rosenzweig can credibly be considered as two of the fathers of the literary movement in contemporary biblical scholarship, although neither Buber nor Rosenzweig was trained as a professional Bible scholar. Among Jewish Bible scholars, close readers such as Meir Weiss, Robert Alter, Michael Fishbane, and Everett Fox have drawn significantly on their insights.

about by the planting of a contradiction, or non sequitur, in the plot or by the introduction of an idiosyncratic, little-used word.³⁹ Something in the course of the narrative obviously and deliberately does not follow, or is patently unjust. The reader is caught short, no longer allowed merely to enjoy the aesthetic harmony of the exposition. There is a dissonance that elicits a question, one that affects both the understanding of the text and the self-understanding of the reader. Issues that have laid dormant or remained latent in the reader are stimulated and come to the surface. Searching for a way out of the contradiction, the reader is invited to scan the deployment of certain key words, famously termed *leitworten*, the roots of which repeat themselves in variegated forms as the narrative develops. By discovering the plan behind the deployment of the key words, the reader is led to a solution of the contradiction. The solution, however, has meaning not only for the story but also for the life of the reader—such that what has been achieved might not be just literary closure but the opening of a question that must continue to occupy and challenge the reader in the midst of his/her life.⁴⁰

One of the most illuminating illustrations of the application of these categories by Rosenzweig can be found in his interpretation of the story of Balaam the seer (Numbers 22–24, with special focus on 22:2–36), a reading that can be found in his remarkably rich essay, “The Secret of Biblical Narrative Form.”⁴¹ Certain aspects of Rosenzweig’s interpretation of this story can be found explicitly stated. Some of his understandings, however, must be inferred from hints, allusions, and oblique

³⁹ In Rosenzweig’s terms, sometimes one of the words in a series derived from like verb roots will serve as the stimulus (*stichwort*) that introduces the urgent question to which the rest of the story will serve as an answer. Repeated instances of that same verb root will provide a “pointed” (*spitze*) response to the textual and existential question stimulated by the first verb form. For example, in Gen. 27:35, after Jacob receives what was to have been Esau’s blessing, by way of deception, Isaac tells the “lamenting Esau”—“Your brother came with *deceit* and took away your blessing.” Readers of this story will have likely been troubled before by the question: How could the biblical hero Jacob do such a horrible thing and gain the blessing to boot? More universally, he/she may have asked him/herself: can long-term ends, like the transmission of God’s covenant, however crucial and lofty, ever justify such devious means? Later on, in Gen. 29:25, the biblical text “answers” without interrupting the narrative by having Jacob say, “Why have you *deceived* me?” when Laban “slips” him Leah instead of Rachel (emphasis added). It would seem that sometimes, however dreadful that might appear, long-term goals must be achieved by short-term deception when there is no alternative. Yet, it must be known that whosoever performs such deception will get his comeuppance in kind.

⁴⁰ In Rosenzweig’s words in *Scripture and Translation*: “The hearer can continue his life only by becoming, precisely, a listener: the story is the lock through which the ship of his life must proceed if it is to continue its journey” (131).

⁴¹ The Balaam reading can be found in Rosenzweig, *Scripture and Translation*, 136 and 138–39. “The Secret of Biblical Narrative Form” was written on February 8, 1928, when Rosenzweig’s paralysis was already very far advanced and about a year before his death.

references. In what follows I will take the liberty of drawing out certain implications that I believe are hinted at in Rosenzweig's sometimes very abbreviated remarks, of connecting between disparate statements located in various parts of his essay and elsewhere, and of applying his aesthetic categories and principles of interpretation both to those textual components that he comments on explicitly and to some that he does not.

Rosenzweig believes that this literary unit in the Bible displays epic characteristics.⁴² That would mean it has a clear beginning ("Now Balak son of Tzippor saw") and a clear ending ("and Balak also went on his way"), giving it definite contours that could be panoramically surveyed.⁴³ There are also repeated words and plot sequences that lend the story a certain texture all its own: the two deputations of nobles from Balak who try to persuade Balaam to come with them; the three efforts of Balaam to get by the obstructions set up by "God's messenger"; Balak's repeated attempts to win a curse for the Israelite people from the mouth of Balaam in return for "honors"—coupled with Balaam's repeated insistence that he can only speak that which God places in his mouth; Balak's three attempts to get Balaam to curse the people from three different places; and so forth. It is also not very difficult to conclude, in surveying these sequences of plot elements, that the story forms a unity that is designed to set up a dichotomy between two worldviews. One view, held by Balak, assumes that the will of the Israelites' God can be magically manipulated, while the other, that advocated by the narrator, maintains that God's choices and promises cannot be affected by magical appeasement. In these respects, and others, the story is no different from any other good book or epic in the Western sense. The narrative is a "created work," lawful and intelligible, the regularities of which contribute to the emergence of a clear and noble message.

Woven into the narrative, however, without undoing its aesthetic integrity, is a "revelational," lyric, or anecdotal dimension that "disturbs the peace." This dimension comes to sight when one notices, early on in the story, a glaring contradiction in the story line. The first time the emissaries of Balak call upon Balaam to come with them, he bids them

⁴² Immediately after his analysis of the Balaam story, Rosenzweig compares some of its "formulaic sentences" to a certain formulaic sentence appearing in the Homeric epic. See Rosenzweig, *Scripture and Translation*, 139–40.

⁴³ For the English text of the Balaam story, I recommend the Everett Fox translation of *The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995). Fox has made a concerted effort to preserve, in English, the principles of the Buber-Rosenzweig translation of the Bible into German, including, and especially, the identical translation of recurring key words. The story opens in Num. 22:2 and ends in Num. 24:25.

spend the night such that he might reply to them according to what God should speak to him. God's response comes in no uncertain terms: Balaam should not go. The people should not be cursed, because it is blessed. Balak, however, proceeds according to the maxim, so appropriate to his magical perspective—"if at first you don't succeed—try, try again."⁴⁴ He interprets Balaam's refusal to come with him not as motivated by God's negative command but by his own greed: he is negotiating for a higher price. He then sends a deputation of nobles of higher rank carrying even higher honors and rewards. At this point, Balaam bids them spend the night again to see what God might have to say this time. Now, however, God says to Balaam, "since it is to call you the men have come, arise, go with them, but—only the word that I speak to you, that (alone) may you do."⁴⁵ The following morning, Balaam gets his famous pack animal ready and sets out on the "path." Then, the narrator says that God was incensed at his going. But it was God himself who gave him permission to go (*kum lech*—arise, go).⁴⁶ What does God really want? Why is God incensed at Balaam for actually obeying His second command to the letter (*va'yakom . . . va'yelech*—Balaam arose . . . and went)?⁴⁷

According to Rosenzweig, the key to understanding the meaning of this deliberate contradiction lies in the deployment of a key word that appears in different forms in the course of the narrative, a word that first appears when Balak sends his second group of emissaries. There, the passage reads: "*Vayosef od Balak sh'loach sarim rabim ve'nichbadim me'eleh*"—so Balak once again sent nobles, greater and more honored than those.⁴⁸ As I said, in keeping with his politics of magic, which is applied to humans and deities indiscriminately, Balak reasons that if Balaam (and through him, God) has not been influenced in the "right" direction the first time, perhaps a change in conditions, particularly economic and political conditions, will bring about the desired result. The biblical narrator, however, indirectly informs us that Balaam, despite his bombastic and lengthy protestations that he cannot contravene the will of God, is actually motivated by the same principle. He reasons, if what God has revealed the first time is not satisfactory and does not enable me to receive the gifts that Balak has to offer, perhaps if I set up the conditions for an additional nocturnal revelation, God

⁴⁴ In Rosenzweig's formulation: "Ordinarily the proverb is right: once is not enough" (*Scripture and Translation*, 139).

⁴⁵ Num. 22:20.

⁴⁶ Num. 22:21.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Num. 22:15; my emphasis.

will tell me something that is closer to what I want to hear. The narrator tells us this, according to Rosenzweig's explicit remarks, by deploying the second appearance of the key word at the point that Balaam addresses the second contingent of deputies, thus: "Ve'ata, shevu na bazeh gam atem halaila, ve'ed'ah mah yosef Adonai daber imi" (So now, pray stay here, you as well tonight, that I might know what YHWH will once again speak with me).⁴⁹ Just as Balak has "tried again," so Balaam, for the same self-serving reasons, "tries again."

Further on, after we learn of God's strange disapproval of his own dispatching of Balaam, the narrative tells of three attempts by Balaam to "move forward" with his plan, all of which are frustrated. First, "YHWH's messenger" appears with his sword drawn "in the way." The ass "turns aside from the way" (*va'tet ha'aton min ha'derech*) to the field, whereupon Balaam strikes it in order to "turn" it back to "the way" (*lehatotah hadarech*) without success.⁵⁰ Off the road, in some vineyard, the ass tries to make it through a narrow clearing hemmed in by a fence on either side. But God's messenger places himself right in front of the animal. The ass again tries to get off "the way," pressing Balaam's foot against the fence. Balaam, frustrated and in pain, once again strikes the ass (*vayosef lehakotah*).⁵¹ His "once again" strategy has been applied once more and apparently for the last time, for God's messenger moves once again as well, standing in a narrow place where there is no longer any "way" to "turn"—right or left.⁵²

According to Rosenzweig's explicit remarks, the key to unraveling the contradiction planted in this part of the Balaam story lies with the key word, *vayosef od*, or *ma yosef od*, both variations of the root *y-s-f*.⁵³ For the likes of Balak and Balaam, if a first attempt at invoking the deity in order to obtain some earthly benefit does not succeed, one must simply change the "formula"—whether ritual, political, or economic. The first time, especially if it does not bring the desired result, is not to be taken seriously. One must act once again. The experience of genuine revelation, however, takes place only once, in a fleeting, unrepeatable present moment. It cannot be invited or controlled. It descends upon one from the outside, and most often goes against one's grain, commanding a course of action quite different from that

⁴⁹ Num. 22:19; my emphasis.

⁵⁰ Num. 22:23.

⁵¹ Num. 22:25.

⁵² Num. 22:26.

⁵³ Rosenzweig, *Scripture and Translation*, 139.

which one might have wished to take.⁵⁴ All subsequent attempts to conjure up a revised, more congenial “revelation” are bound to be false and must ultimately come to naught.⁵⁵ Only the first time really counts. Any attempts to contrive a second and third opportunity are bound to be frustrated. Rosenzweig goes even further, however. The Balaam story concerns not only what happened to some ancient Near Eastern seer but also what can happen to any person in a similar situation. Sometimes, says Rosenzweig, if one tries to obtain a more amenable dispensation from above, God himself will actually lend his “outer voice” to one’s own, self-serving “inner voice,” seeming to support a “second revelation”—deliberately transmitting an ambivalent message concerning his true intention and will.⁵⁶ This, in order that the human being him/herself would be compelled to discern between the true revelation and the false one in the course of his/her own subsequent life experience. How does this take place?

In order to answer this question, we must apply Rosenzweig’s explicit remarks, the ones concerning the first pair of key words, to the narrative situation that presents itself further on in the story, when the key words appear for a second time. When the ass tries to get through the area surrounded by fences on both sides, pressing Balaam’s leg against the wall, the text says: “and Balaam hit her *once again*.” But Balaam’s “once again” is countered, this time finally and with no recourse, by the parallel action of God’s messenger, who “once again” moves into such a position that Balaam cannot get by.⁵⁷ The course of the false revelation has been permanently blocked. Now, if we follow Rosenzweig’s line of thinking even further, another curious word repetition that he does not mention explicitly can be fruitfully interpreted in his spirit. When God expresses his dissatisfaction with Balaam for

⁵⁴ The source of Rosenzweig’s testimony to revelation as something that comes at one from the outside and goes against one’s grain can already be found in his “Germ Cell of the ‘Star,’” included in Rosenzweig, *The New Thinking*, 45–47.

⁵⁵ I am indebted to an anonymous reader of this article for calling to my attention that the Bible does present us with “conjured” revelations. Perhaps two of the best examples of these, mentioned by the above-mentioned reader, are Moses’s conjuring of God’s response to the insurrection of Korah in Numbers 16 and Elijah’s conjuring of God’s response to his sacrifice, as opposed to the sacrifices offered to the Ba’al—in 1 Kings 18. My sense is that Rosenzweig would probably say that these are “conjured” revelations only from an external point of view. Actually, both of these revelations of God’s presence do go against the human grain, and “descend” from the outside in the sense that they oppose the conventional human wisdom and do not tell the people what they spontaneously would want to hear.

⁵⁶ In *Scripture and Translation*, Rosenzweig says, “If we are not to be satisfied with God’s first clear word, but must try what God, commencing anew, will say to us a second time, then God will unerringly speak the words of our own heart’s demon” (139).

⁵⁷ Num. 22:25–26; my emphasis.

going with Balak's emissaries, the text reads: "But YHWH's *anger flared up* [*Va'yichar af Elohim*] because he was going."⁵⁸ In parallel fashion, when Balaam is finally halted on the wrong path that God himself has set him upon, the text reads: "And Balaam's *anger flared up* [*Va'yichar af Bil'am*] and he struck the she-ass with his staff."⁵⁹ These words are not used at any other point in this part of the narrative.⁶⁰ It would seem, then, that subliminally Balaam knew full well that the "second revelation" was self-serving and mercenary and that only the first was genuine. He knew deep down that going with Balak's emissaries was displeasing to God. Now, if everything on the way had gone well, there would have been no reason for Balaam to reconsider the wisdom of his chosen path. His frustrations on that path, however, cause him to wonder whether he should have taken it at all. His anger (*Va'yichar af*) at not being able to get through becomes anger at himself for taking this frustrating, wrong path in the first place, the one that he knew all the time would anger (*Va'yichar af*) God. At first, he can only express his anger and frustration by striking the animal. With the help of God's messenger with his drawn sword, however, he realizes that it is he, not the ass, who has strayed from the path. Coming back to Rosenzweig's explicit, though much abbreviated comments, it was not the ass that was worthy of death "by now" (*ki ata*). It is, rather, Balaam himself who could and should have been smitten to death "by now" (*ki ata*) for having gone off the right path.⁶¹

If this were merely another Western epic story, we could now say that the earlier contradiction regarding God's true intention has now been explained and that the aesthetic unity of the story has now been restored. However, as Rosenzweig points out, the purpose of the biblical story is not "art for art's sake." The Western epic book or narrative achieves its purpose if it succeeds in creating a "world" of its own that, by virtue of its aesthetic beauty and carefully crafted vividness, wafts the reader away from his/her own world to a virtual world of the text's

⁵⁸ Num. 22:22; my emphasis.

⁵⁹ Num. 22:27; my emphasis.

⁶⁰ They are used again for a third and finally emphatic time at a later point in the narrative to describe Balak's infuriation at Balaam's repeated refusal to curse the Israelite people. In Num. 24:10, the text reads: "Balak's anger flared up at Bil'am, he smacked his hands (together). Balak said to Bil'am: To revile my enemies I had you called, and, here: you have blessed, yes, blessed them, these three times!" Looked at from the perspective of three repetitions, we get the following picture: at the beginning, God is angry at Balaam, who secretly wishes to curse Israel in order to obtain honor from Balak. At the end, Balak is angry at Balaam, who actually blesses Israel in accordance with God's wishes. In the middle, we have Balaam himself, who is frustrated and angry at being "caught in the middle" between the wishes of God and Balak.

⁶¹ Num. 22:29, 33; Rosenzweig, *Scripture and Translation*, 136.

own making.⁶² The reader is temporarily convinced that the self-sufficient world of the story is real. Her place and charge in her own world is temporarily forgotten. The Hebrew or Jewish uniqueness of the biblical story, however, is, for Rosenzweig, that it does not remove one from one's own world and waft one away to another world experienced in one's leisure time. Rather, it responds to the dormant and latent life questions of the reader, presenting challenges and generating new questions that must be applied to her "real" life. The dissonance brought about by the textual contradictions must and should continue to trouble the reader in the midst of her very life: Is there such a thing as genuine revelation? If there is, how is it to be distinguished from illusion and wishful thinking? Must a "real" command always run counter to my own innermost desires? Suppose I have learned to distinguish between genuine and phony revelation according to the Rosenzweigian criteria of externality, unrepeatability, uncontrollability, and so forth—how must these criteria be applied to the idiosyncratic circumstances of my life?

As I said, in Rosenzweig's understanding, the revelational, anecdotal, and dialogical qualities of the biblical story—those qualities that make it a "Jewish book"—do not undo its aesthetic and epic unity, those qualities that make it a book, in general. The Hebrew aspects of biblical narrative are woven into its Western aspects, such that they are distinguishable only by analysis. Those anecdotal moments wherein a question is addressed to the reader, arresting her attention, demanding self-reflection, and, at least as far as she is concerned, stopping the action, also serve to move the plot along. The key word *va'yosef*, while calling attention to the problem of immediate as opposed to conveniently "revised" divine speech, nonetheless has a role in the continuous, unfolding motion of the tale. In Rosenzweig's words, "the narrator has not, even for the sake of that effect (namely, in this case, addressing the reader on the question of genuine and false revelation), departed for a moment from his purely objective stance (as the third-person narrator of the course of events in the story)."⁶³ In Rosenzweig's microcosmic conception of the Bible, just as revelation does not undo creation but actually discloses and highlights aspects of its intelligible and intentional character, so too, the anecdotal does not undo the epic but, rather, provides the key to the understanding of its plan and intent. Divine speech always passes through human speech forms and literary forms and is not communicated by way of some wholly other

⁶² Rosenzweig, *Scripture and Translation*, 132–33, 141–42.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 136.

language or literature.⁶⁴ Human beings likewise build their creations as God builds his creation, and they plant dialogicality in the weave of their texts just as God planted dialogicality into the fabric of the world that he created.

As we have seen, the disclosure of these insights depends on a sensitivity to contradictions in biblical narrative. These contradictions, however, are not regarded negatively by Rosenzweig as indicators of the incoherent and heterogeneous character of the text. It is precisely the contradictions that give the text its unique literary character as an epic with a lyric or anecdotal dimension woven into it.

LEO STRAUSS ON THE LITERARY CHARACTER OF BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

Unlike Franz Rosenzweig, Leo Strauss did not testify to having been touched by the divine "Presence" or "Call."⁶⁵ He most certainly did not belittle the importance of being so touched, nor did he show disrespect for thinkers and scholars of the highest caliber who bore witness to religious experience. His remarks about Franz Rosenzweig and others show that the contrary was the case.⁶⁶ Yet, although he may have "longed with all his heart for revelation," he could not, in all honesty and "probity," claim to have experienced it, whether directly or through human tradition.⁶⁷ While he maintained that a genuine, "categorical" morality is dependent on belief in the miraculous revelation of an omnipotent, mysterious God, he opted for the philosophical life

⁶⁴ At the beginning of "The Secret of Biblical Narrative Form," Rosenzweig writes, "the line of division [between the 'religious' aspects of the text and the 'aesthetic' aspects] is a mistake in the first place . . . where the aesthetic object does not become an absolute, neither does the religious object; it does not reduce itself to a special, religious sub-set of culture, *but it remains in possession of all its connections with reality—esthetic reality included . . . it must . . . avail itself of all means of expression*" (emphasis mine; 130).

⁶⁵ For Strauss's description of the "absolute experience" as the "Presence" or the "Call," see his "Preface" to the English edition of Baruch Spinoza's *Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), the most up-to-date and finally edited version of which appears in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, esp. 146–50. See also his discussion of the touch of the "divine thing" or the "divine command" as the basis of religious experience in his article, "The Law of Reason in the Kuzari," 105.

⁶⁶ Concerning Franz Rosenzweig, Strauss wrote, in his introduction to Spinoza's *Critique of Religion*, in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, that he "is thought to be the greatest thinker whom German Jewry brought forth" (147). The original German edition of *Critique of Religion*, titled *Die Religionskritik Spinozas* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1930), is dedicated to Rosenzweig. Strauss's correspondence with Eric Voegelin testifies to his great respect for this deeply religious thinker. See Peter Emberly and Barry Cooper, eds. and trans., *Faith and Political Philosophy: The Correspondence between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, 1934–1964* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993).

⁶⁷ Strauss, "The Law of Reason in the Kuzari," 140; "Preface to Spinoza's *Critique of Religion*," 172; and "Jerusalem and Athens," 386.

of “investigation” as opposed to the religiously pious life of “obedience”—in full cognizance of the moral consequences of his choice.⁶⁸ He did not believe that philosophy could refute revelation, but neither did he believe that revelation could refute philosophy.⁶⁹ In his view, lack of common ground regarding first principles made genuine argument between these archetypal human stances impossible.⁷⁰ Yet, he thought it important that each stance should maintain a certain “openness” to the claims of the other.⁷¹ He most particularly exhorted philosophers to be truly “open-minded” and not to foreclose the possibility of revelation in advance, as so many contemporary thinkers seemed to him to have done.⁷² For this reason, he always sought to interpret that text, which, in the Western tradition, has claimed to speak for revelation, the Bible, “in light of its highest possibility.”⁷³

In light of the above, Strauss’s mode of thinking and writing was not relational and “grammatical” but propositional and “mono-logical.” He did not think of human creativity or love as correlative with divine creativity or love.⁷⁴ More particularly, he did not relate to the writing of literary or philosophical works as anything other than a human activity, although he did not doubt the honesty of those who believed they had either experienced, or been entrusted with, a revelatory message. He too saw “books” as “wholes” and as a kind of “microcosmos.”⁷⁵ He also believed that contradictions in texts written by great minds were invitations to more penetrating interpretation, rather than indications of disjointed composition. Like Rosenzweig, he thought that it was precisely in the contradictions that the deepest meaning of the

⁶⁸ See Strauss, “The Law of Reason in the Kuzari,” 140; his introduction to *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, 15 n. 10; and his essay, “On the Interpretation of Genesis,” in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 373.

⁶⁹ See Strauss’s lecture series, “Progress or Return,” transcribed and edited in his *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 123–32.

⁷⁰ See Strauss, “The Law of Reason in the Kuzari,” 105, and “Progress or Return,” 131.

⁷¹ See “Progress or Return,” 117, where Strauss writes, “No one can be both a philosopher and a theologian, or, for that matter, a third which is beyond the conflict between philosophy and theology, or a synthesis of both. But every one of us can and ought to be either the one or the other, the philosopher open to the challenge of theology, or the theologian open to the challenge of philosophy.”

⁷² See Strauss, “On the Interpretation of Genesis,” 360.

⁷³ See Strauss’s “Preface to Spinoza’s *Critique of Religion*,” 165–66.

⁷⁴ For the difference between “logical” and “grammatical” thinking, see Rosenzweig, *The New Thinking*, 87. See Leo Strauss, “What Is Liberal Education?” in *Liberalism Ancient and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), where he writes that philosophers spoke “monologues” (7).

⁷⁵ Note the following testimony by Strauss’s student, Werner Dannhauser, in his recollection, “Becoming Naïve Again,” in *American Scholar* 44, no. 4 (1975): 640: “Leo Strauss, who turned books into a cosmos for us. . . . We learned that books were wholes, and that it was safest to assume they were perfect wholes.”

text was to be found. Unlike Rosenzweig, however, he thought that what made the Bible a Jewish writing was not integrated into its book-like aspect but, rather, set against the concept of the "book" in the Western sense. This, even though, with time, biblical writings often took on the form of books.⁷⁶

How, then, did Strauss answer the question, what is a book? For Strauss, the Western book is an inheritance from the Greek book, and the Greek book is an outgrowth of the orientation of the ancient Greek philosophers, of certain assumptions that they held in common. For the Greek philosophers, what Strauss called the "right life" was considered to be the life that takes its bearings from an understanding of the cosmos. Greek philosophers tried to understand what the different beings that comprised the cosmos are and what the cosmos as a whole is. For them, the quest to understand the eternal natures of beings, including human nature—the life of theoretical contemplation—was more important and had a higher dignity than moral decision making in the morass of the particular, changeable "human things."⁷⁷ To be sure, a social and political life was regarded as indispensable and as an absolutely necessary, practical prerequisite and corequisite for the theoretical life, but, for them, it possessed no intrinsic value.

From the perspective of the classical Greek philosophers, change becomes visible and understandable only against a background of identity and continuity.⁷⁸ What then, they asked, are the continuities of the cosmic order? What are the continuous features of human nature? Within the framework of this classical perspective, the human being was not considered as set against the cosmos, or as existing in opposition to nature, but as being part of nature. It was also assumed that the effects of human actions, or the changing vicissitudes of history, could be best understood as resulting from certain permanent features of human nature.⁷⁹ This view is the exact reverse of a certain view commonly assumed today, at least in academic circles, namely, that so-called human nature is not fixed at all; rather, it is subject to an almost unlimited variability due to the vicissitudes of history and "culture."

⁷⁶ See Strauss, "Jerusalem and Athens," 394. Further, much of the following discussion of the issue, what is a book? is based in Strauss, "On the Interpretation of Genesis," 373–74.

⁷⁷ See Strauss's introduction to *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, 12–13. In "On the Interpretation of Genesis," 369, Strauss writes, "the human thing is a word of depreciation in Greek philosophy."

⁷⁸ See the last paragraph of Strauss's "Restatement on Xenophon's Hiero," in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 471.

⁷⁹ See Leo Strauss, *The City and the Man* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), 143, 157, and most particularly 159, where he writes, with obvious sympathy, "Thucydides sees human nature as the stable ground of all of its effects—war and peace, barbarism and Greekness, civic concord and discord, sea-power and land-power, the few and the many."

The “right life,” then, according to the Greek philosophers, is a life dedicated to the goal of “looking up to the heavens.”⁸⁰ This expression is not meant in the sense of submissive religious piety. “Looking up to the heavens” means regarding the cosmos and its understanding, as well as the understanding of the place of the human being in the whole, as the highest end of human striving. All action, all human living together, should be organized and regulated such that those who have the requisite capability and disposition should be able to dedicate themselves to this highest of human ends. Practice should serve theory, since the theoretical life, the life of searching for the truth about the world and about the place of the human being in the vault of heaven and earth, is the only life worth living. This is Socrates’ “examined life.”

The Bible, as we will see in more detail when we examine the way that Strauss reads the first chapters of Genesis, “demotes” the status of the heavens and of the life that takes its bearings from a contemplation of the cosmos.⁸¹ What is important for the biblical authors is whether or not the human being sanctifies his/her ways upon the earth or corrupts his/her ways on the earth. The heavens have no life; they serve life on earth. According to the biblical perspective, the human being is not human by virtue of his capacity for theoretical contemplation but, rather, by virtue of his freedom, in the sense of his capacity to follow in the right way, the way commanded by God, or to depart from the right way.⁸² It is precisely the “human things,” denigrated by the Greek philosophers—the vicissitudes of human life, and human decision making with regard to those changing vicissitudes, that interest the biblical writers primarily.

As we have seen, then, the classical Greek philosophers did not value the temporal, the particular, and the changeable—the things that are in motion. They valued the eternal, the universal, and the continuing—those things that are at rest. Rest was considered a more complete, less needful state than motion. For this reason, these thinkers valued philosophy and poetry, those pursuits that try to give an account of the permanent human condition, and did not value history, a pursuit that was understood to be a narrative recounting of particular and changeable things.⁸³ It is this philosophic or poetic perspective that begets the Greek, or Western, book.

Strauss, like Rosenzweig, also considered the classic “book” to be a kind of microcosm. For the ancient Greeks, both the cosmos itself and

⁸⁰ See Strauss, “On the Interpretation of Genesis,” 370, 373–74.

⁸¹ Ibid., 369.

⁸² Ibid., 366, 371.

⁸³ Ibid., 373–74. See also Strauss, *The City and Man*, 142.

the beings within it were understood as organisms—as wholes that have goals and ends proper to themselves. These wholes are composed of parts, each of which contributes to the realization of the ends of the whole. Similarly, the Greek book, whether of poetry (including what we would call fiction, prose, or literature) or of philosophy, imitates these organisms and the cosmos qua organism. There is no part in the good Western book that is not absolutely necessary for the realization of the end of the whole.⁸⁴

Now with regard to the cosmos, thinkers have been searching from time immemorial for the overarching principle that could be said to characterize the whole as a whole. This search is ever continuing and never ending, since the different unifying principles—from Thales's water to Spinoza's mathematical-causal nexus—have all been found wanting. Yet, the search itself is considered by Strauss, in the spirit of the Greek philosophers, to be of supreme value. It is the basis of what it means to be human, namely, to be a thinking, examining, and investigating being.⁸⁵ The attempt, current nowadays, to delegitimize the search for what Strauss liked to call "the truth," and to be satisfied that each can have his or her own "truth" as a matter of preference, interest, personal authenticity, or culture is, for Strauss, ultimately dehumanizing.⁸⁶

The philosopher, then, seeks to be sovereign over his knowledge of being and the beings. While he might attain a certain measure of wisdom, if he is a true philosopher in the Socratic sense, he will "know that (ultimately) he does not know" and that this kind of sovereign knowledge is not available to him. In order to compensate himself for this lack of wholeness in his knowledge, the philosopher, or poet, creates his own whole—the book. With regard to the good Western book, the writer is sovereign over the beginning, the middle, and the end, over the parts and the whole. He rules over the way the details will both constitute and reflect the whole. In Strauss's language, the book is the "countercharm to the charm of despair which the never-satisfied quest for perfect knowledge necessarily engenders."⁸⁷

The end, or goal, of the book is to stimulate the reader, or those readers who are capable of it, to independent thought. These people

⁸⁴ Strauss, "On the Interpretation of Genesis," 374. See also Strauss, "Jerusalem and Athens," 394.

⁸⁵ See Strauss, "Progress or Return," 122–23.

⁸⁶ In "Jerusalem and Athens," Strauss writes, "The variety of cultures that have hitherto emerged contradicts the oneness of truth. Truth is not a woman so that each man can have his own truth as he can have his own wife" (379).

⁸⁷ See Strauss, "On the Interpretation of Genesis," 374.

who “love to think” are fewer than they, or we, would like to think.⁸⁸ By this Strauss means not just having uncommon thoughts about this or that but independent thinking about the abiding features of the human condition, the question of the right life for human beings, the nature of the whole, and the place of the human being within the whole. Now it is virtually certain that the kind of independent thinking that the classic philosopher or the classic poet is trying to stimulate will run counter to what Galbraith called the “conventional wisdom” or what Plato called “opinion.”⁸⁹ It will also likely run counter to the conventional wisdom accepted in so-called open or democratic societies.⁹⁰ This means that often great writers will not be entirely explicit about their views or about their attempt to woo some of their readers away from opinion to a perspective they regard as closer to the truth. They will often conceal their real views, lest their unconventional thinking be discovered, leading to their condemnation by society. This condemnation can take many forms—from academic delegitimation and intellectual ostracism, of the kind so well known today, all the way to inquisition.⁹¹ Therefore, a great cognitive effort is needed in order to understand a great work of philosophy or literature. One must look for the connections between the parts and the whole and try to figure out the author’s plan or conception. Not all readers have the patience, the fortitude, or the ability to do this, and, therefore, not all readers will succeed. Even great readers will feel small in the presence of the great writers and will sense that their interpretations, however comprehensive or penetrating, are lacking in some important way. Strauss felt this way about Plato and about Maimonides, for example, although by no means only about them.⁹²

Now to our central question: did Strauss think the Bible was a “book?” Did he think it was a Jewish book and, if so, in what sense? As we would expect, Strauss’s answer as to the “form” of the Bible, or what he liked to call its “literary character,” is closely tied to his perception of content of the biblical worldview. According to Strauss’s

⁸⁸ For those who “love to think,” see the lead article, “Persecution and the Art of Writing,” in Strauss’s collection titled *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, 24–25.

⁸⁹ See the lead article, “What Is Political Philosophy?” in Strauss’s collection, *What Is Political Philosophy?* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1959), 10–11.

⁹⁰ For a most articulate rendering of the kinds of sacred myths propounded in supposedly “liberal” societies, see the notorious work of Strauss’s famous student and expositor, Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), especially the chapter titled “Our Virtue,” 25–43.

⁹¹ See Strauss, “Persecution and the Art of Writing,” 32–33.

⁹² See Strauss’s letter to Hans-Georg Gadamer in the *Independent Journal of Philosophy* (1978), 2:5–12.

understanding, the biblical authors had concluded that no autonomous, independent human knowledge of the cosmos is possible. Now Socrates and the classical Greek philosophers also knew this—they “knew that they do not know.” They knew they could not know the whole as a whole. This “knowledge of not knowing,” however, merely propelled them to continue their search. They thought of the very process of search as ennobling for a thinking being. For this reason, they did not regard philosophy as tragic, even though they knew that the results of the philosophic quest must always remain inconclusive.⁹³

The biblical writers, however, “processed” (as we say today) their lack of knowledge differently. Acutely aware of their human limitations, they came to the conclusion that the pursuit of sovereign knowledge of the whole might not really be the right life. They were no less penetrating than the philosophers, but, unlike them, they were open to the possibility that some kind of extrahuman instruction might be necessary if human beings are to know what the right life is. They went even further; they bore witness to the fact that such extrahuman instruction had indeed been forthcoming and that they had witnessed it either directly or through the medium of tradition.⁹⁴

For the biblical writers, then, the right life involves not only the frank recognition of essential human limitations but, in addition, a disposition to rely on the guidance of God, to believe in His promises, and to obey His commandments.⁹⁵ The world, in their view, should not be approached as an intelligible whole. The world, and human life, are shrouded in an essential mystery and have the character of a great secret. This mysteriousness and sense of secret cannot and should not be dissipated.⁹⁶ From the biblical perspective, the world and human life exist in relation to the mysterious God who dwells in a thick cloud.⁹⁷

How is all this reflected, then, in the “form” of the Bible—in its “literary character?” Certainly, many biblical writings have been edited such that they seem to have the appearance of a book.⁹⁸ However, writings that are predicated on the orientation briefly articulated above do

⁹³ See Strauss, “Progress or Return,” 122–23.

⁹⁴ For evidence that the biblical writers “thought through” this question with no less profundity than the philosophers, see *ibid.*, 119.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 104, 119.

⁹⁶ See the end of Strauss’s lecture, “Why We Remain Jews,” preserved and annotated by Kenneth Hart Green in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 328–29, for the seemingly improbable connection drawn by Strauss between the very progress of science, on the one hand, and the irreducibility of mystery, on the other.

⁹⁷ See Strauss, “Jerusalem and Athens,” 393.

⁹⁸ See Strauss, “On the Interpretation of Genesis,” 373–74, as well as “Jerusalem and Athens,” 394.

not, and cannot, really have the form of a Greek book, at least not at the outset. The Bible, the Pentateuch, a single book of the Pentateuch—even certain isolated stories within the Pentateuch—are not works that have been written by one author. There is no single human writer who could possibly be sovereign over every detail that goes into the book or is left out of it. No single writer is possessed of a plan that underlies a whole that supposedly imitates the elusive cosmic whole. Biblical writings are not the fruit of the conception of one person. From the biblical standpoint, the human being does not start.⁹⁹

For Strauss, as for Rosenzweig, the aesthetic form (or lack of form) of the Bible reflects, microcosmically, the conceptions of the authors of the Bible regarding the cosmos and the proper relation of the human being to it. God's plans for the cosmos and for human beings—the beginnings and the endings—are mysterious. Therefore, it is impossible for the plan of the Bible to be entirely intelligible. The biblical scribe is not sovereign over how to begin, how to proceed, or how to end. He does not begin the writing. Before he could begin to write, he is confronted with writings, sacred writings that have been passed down to him, writings that he himself did not create and that bind him in advance of any "creation" of his own.¹⁰⁰ This situation runs parallel to the human condition in general as the Bible sees it—we find ourselves in a given world that we have not created. We are not "self-making." Our fundamental situation predates us.

Now what does the biblical writer do with the writings he has inherited? He may edit them somewhat; he may change them somewhat—but he will try to change as little as possible. He will change only those things that might undermine the piety of his readers, passages that seem to deviate from the pious perspective recounted above. He might exclude things that he thinks could lead his readers astray, things that "could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be rendered compatible with the fundamental and authoritative teaching" concerning the mysteriousness of God and the imperative that his promises be believed and his commandments obeyed.¹⁰¹

This reverence for inherited writings, and the felt obligation to pass them on, can lead to the inclusion of writings that contradict one another. Sometimes, these contradictions will be left in place and not reconciled by the editors, since these very contradictions bear witness to the impossibility of talking about God without contradictions. The

⁹⁹ See Strauss, "Progress or Return," 120; "On the Interpretation of Genesis," 374; and "Jerusalem and Athens," 394.

¹⁰⁰ See Strauss, "On the Interpretation of Genesis," 374.

¹⁰¹ Strauss, "Jerusalem and Athens," 394.

mysteries of God's interaction with the world and of God's interaction with human beings are perhaps best reflected in contradictions rather than in logical harmony. Sometimes, the biblical scribes and editors will "modify" or "compile" multiple writings so as to make them a "single writing." This process, too, however, will also be accompanied by a "spirit of humility and reverence."¹⁰² In this case, as we shall see, certain contradictions or incongruities, consciously embedded in the narrative, will hold the key to a more penetrating understanding of the biblical worldview. While the interpretation of these contradictions will lead to the emergence of a more all-encompassing whole, it will be the kind of wholeness that will disavow the conception of the self-sufficiency of the cosmic whole and deny the sovereignty of the human author over the microcosmic, textual whole.

For an example of contradictions that have deliberately been left in place, and that were not meant to be overcome, we turn to Strauss's remarkably close reading of the opening passages of Genesis.¹⁰³ The Bible reads, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." As if from out of the blue, Strauss asks, "Who says this?" Who is the "narrator" of this sentence? Whether we see the text as historical or fictional, whether we think that God wrote it or human beings wrote it, the text, qua literary text, does not tell us who the narrator is. Well, says Strauss, anyone with common sense will surmise that there are only two alternatives: either this is told by God or by a "nameless man." Once we begin to reflect on this, however, we realize that both options are problematic. True, the traditional assumption is that it was God. But the text does not say it was God, and the Bible has no problem attributing speech to God if it so wishes, by saying "and God said" or the like. If we reflect on the possibility that it was a nameless man—why, then both the author and the reader know that a human being could not have been present at the creation, and the text is written from the perspective of an eyewitness. In reflecting on this question of "Who says this?" Strauss answers—"we are not told, hence we do not know." He then asks: "Is this silence about the speaker at the beginning of the Bible due to the fact that it does not make a difference who says it? This would be a philosopher's reason. Is it also the biblical reason? [Strauss seems to doubt it.] We are not told; hence we do not know."¹⁰⁴ Philosophers are only concerned with the truth or untruth of a statement, not with the identity or authority of the speaker or

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 361–62.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

writer.¹⁰⁵ Biblical writers, however, would be immensely concerned if the author was to be regarded as God or a human being. So the Bible's ambiguity cannot be chalked up to indifference. In repeating the phrase "we are not told; hence we do not know," Strauss is already telling us something about the biblical worldview, something that is articulated by the Bible at the very beginning by its pregnant silence on this question. As regards "first things," we have no independent knowledge, and we never will. What we are not told from without about such things, we will never know. Some things we will be told, and some things we will never be told. At the end of his reflections on this question, Strauss summarizes by saying, "The beginning of the Bible is not readily intelligible. It is strange."¹⁰⁶ Not only the content of the opening of the Bible is strange—as we shall see when Strauss takes up the question of the "void" and the "darkness"—the very form in which the Bible opens is strange. Contradictory opinions concerning the question of the narrator of the Bible's opening passages are equally plausible and problematic. According to Strauss, the editors do not wish to dissipate that ambiguity but, rather, to call attention to it, for "those who have ears to hear."¹⁰⁷

As in all great writings, the form of the discourse is corroborated by the content, and vice versa. Just as the form of the opening of the Bible is "strange," so, too, is its content. Before God is described as acting, there seems to be a kind of primordial "earth" already in place: "And the earth was *without form* and *void*; and *darkness* was on the face of the *deep*; and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the *waters*."¹⁰⁸ We seem to be dealing here with a series of amorphous, undefined, inchoate, mysterious things. The most contradictory and ambiguous thing of all, however, is, according to Strauss, that "*It is not clear* whether the earth thus described was created by God or antedated His creation."¹⁰⁹ On the one hand, the Bible starts by saying that God created the heaven and the earth and only then describes the primordial earth. This would seem to indicate that there could have been no earth whatsoever, not even a primordial one, had not God first created heaven and earth. Later, he acted upon that primordial earth to give it order and form. On the other hand, it is also perfectly plausible to conclude that "the earth in its primeval form, without form and void,

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ See Strauss, "What Is Liberal Education?" 5.

¹⁰⁸ The quote is based on Strauss's English rendition of the biblical text in "On the Interpretation of Genesis," 362; my emphasis.

¹⁰⁹ See Strauss, "Jerusalem and Athens," 382; my emphasis.

was not created, that creation was formation rather than creation out of nothing."¹¹⁰ The first sentence of the Bible would then be construed to indicate the occasion of God having brought forth form from the void, rather than any creation of heaven and earth that predated this formation. Were the beginnings, then, a matter of creation from nothing or a formation of preexisting, amorphous elements? Here, too (although here Strauss does not use this phrase again explicitly)—“We are not told; hence we do not know.” The question of the beginnings is left open. The contradictory alternatives are left in place. The beginnings are, and remain, shrouded in mystery.

Immediately following the above reflections, Strauss draws attention to what he regards as the most significant incongruity in the first biblical creation story: “The Bible tells us that the sun was created after the plants and the trees, the vegetative world, was created. The vegetative world was created on the third day and the sun on the fourth day. That is the most massive difficulty of the account given in the first chapter of the Bible. From what point of view is it intelligible that the vegetative world should precede the sun?”¹¹¹ Every man, whether ancient or modern, knows nothing can grow unless there is first sun. Such an account contradicts both logic and experience.

According to Strauss, this incongruity is not evidence of sloppy thinking or poor editing—its aim is to call attention to the whole sequence of creation and to the overarching principle that underlies it. Strauss’s reading of the sequence of creation can be summarized more or less as follows: The first creation story is divided into two parts, each consisting of three creation days.¹¹² This is indicated by the fact that the first half begins with the creation of light, while the second half begins with the creation of the sun, moon, and stars, those heavenly bodies that represent light for us, the inhabitants of the earth. Further, the first triad ends with the creation of two things—the earth and sea, on the one hand, and the vegetative world, on the other. The second triad likewise ends with the creation of two things, “the terrestrial brutes and man.” The whole creation story is informed by a drive toward separation. The first created thing is light, which makes the discernment of separated things possible—in darkness the various created things cannot be distinguished from one another. Next we are told of the creation of things that separate, like the firmament. Following that come separated things, the land and the seas. None of these things, however—the heaven, the waters, the earth—are composed of hetero-

¹¹⁰ See Strauss, “On the Interpretation of Genesis,” 362.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 363.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 366–67.

geneous parts, of species or individuals; neither do they occupy a demarcated space. They form the contiguous background for the emergence of the separated species. The third day brings us the earth and the vegetation upon it. The vegetation is tied to the earth. There is no direct speech of God calling forth the vegetation—he commands the earth to bring forth vegetation, and so it does. Vegetation is like the “skin” of the earth.

As I mentioned above, Strauss believed that the principle underlying the creation narrative was one of ever more elaborate separation. Since the structure of the narrative reveals both unity and dichotomy (two parallel triads with both common elements and differences), it makes sense to regard the second triad as both continuing the principle of the first, yet maintaining its own distinctiveness by modifying it somewhat. The second triad, then, introduces the principle of local motion, which is a heightened form of separation. Not only is the moving thing separated from other things, but it can separate itself from its ground on account of its motion. The first moving things to be created are the heavenly bodies—the sun, moon, and stars. They do indeed move, but they cannot change their course—they move on fixed courses. Following this, the birds, the fish, and the land animals are created. These creatures can change their courses, although they cannot change their ways, the fixed patterns and habits of their actions. Only human beings can change their ways, and they are created last.

It is now clear how it could be “intelligible” to the biblical writer(s) to place vegetation before the sun in the sequence of creation. Vegetation does not possess local motion and the sun does. The creation sequence of the Bible is apparently not meant to be an empirical or material account of the origin or generation of the species. It represents a hierarchy of ends. One thing is certain as regards this hierarchy: in diametric opposition to the Greek philosophical perspective, motion is to be preferred to rest. Bodies that possess local motion are closer to the “end” of creation than bodies that do not. Further, living motion is to be preferred to lifeless motion. The smallest birds, and the most “lowly” fish—who are sensate beings and thereby capable of being addressed in the second person (“be fruitful and multiply”)—and who can change their “courses,” have more dignity than the “highest” stars. According to Strauss’s understanding of Greek thought, the heavens and the heavenly bodies are conceived there as cosmos—the vault of heaven and earth as a whole.¹¹³ Understanding the principles or ideas

¹¹³ See *ibid.*, where Strauss writes, “Heaven means for the Greek thinkers the same as the world, the cosmos. Heaven means a whole, the vault which comprises everything else” (369).

by which heaven and earth are governed should be the aim of all human striving on earth. One should take one's bearings from the contemplation of the cosmos as the basis of one's life on earth. Earth, in a sense, serves heaven. The Bible, however, deliberately demotes the heavens, or cosmos, as a focus for human striving—not only by placing it before the birds and fish but also by leaving it as the only aspect of creation that is neither blessed nor called good.

Finally, the human being, who can not only change his course but can also change his ways and deeds, is the creature possessed of the highest dignity. He is the most eminently separated and locomotive creature on earth. He is created on the sixth day, and he is to be contrasted with those species that are the least separated from the earth, the plants that were created on the parallel double-creation day, the third day.

The human being, then, is free either to follow God's way or to follow ways of his own devising. This capacity of man is tested and acted out in the next two chapters of Genesis. In his brief analysis of Genesis 2–3, Strauss confronts one of the most well-known set of discrepancies in biblical literature between the account of creation to be found in those chapters and the one I have briefly recounted—from Genesis 1.¹¹⁴ For Strauss, however, as for Rosenzweig, contradictions are the crux of the Bible. In his words: "This second account answers not how the heaven and earth and all their hosts have come into being, but how human life as we know it—beset with evils with which it was not beset originally—has come into being. This second account may only supplement the first account, but it may also correct it and thus contradict it. After all, the Bible never teaches that one can speak of the creation without contradicting oneself. . . . The mysteries of God are the contradictions regarding God."¹¹⁵

The framework of this essay will not allow us to take note of all the contradictions discussed by Strauss in this connection. We will focus, then, on those discrepancies that bear the most significance for the question of the relationship between the Jewish perspective of the Bible and that of Greek philosophy. In chapter 1, the human being is described as having been created in the "image of God." Although he is the most "separable" being, he comes to sight in continuity with all the other beings as the "highest" being with the exception of God. While not called "good" (reflecting his ambiguous potential to choose between good and evil), he is nonetheless blessed and given a positive

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 370–73.

¹¹⁵ See Strauss, "Jerusalem and Athens," 384–85.

commandment—to be fruitful and multiply and to rule over the beasts. Man and woman are created simultaneously, and there are no indications of an evil or malicious being having been brought forth during the six days of creation.

In the second account, however, the human being is described as having been created from the dust of the earth. He is completely separated from the panoply of creatures, and his own creation becomes the sole theme of the narrative. Rather than a positive commandment, he is given a negative commandment—to refrain from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the beasts appear as his help-mates and companions. The woman is created after the man, from a part of his body, and we are introduced to a creature that seems to be bent on congenital malice—the serpent.

According to Strauss, it is important for the biblical authors or editors to point out that man is not only possessed of a “high” side but also a “low” side—one that puts him on a par with the beasts and makes him susceptible to temptation from a woman to whom he is “cleaving” because she is “flesh of his flesh.” Since the man and the woman were living in a kind of childlike innocence, with no incentive to disobey God, a malicious creature had to appear in order to tempt them in the direction of the kind of knowledge of good and evil that is independent of God’s guidance. A negative command had to be issued in order to test the obedience of human beings with regard to good and evil. Negative commands draw borderlines that are not to be crossed, even though people might very much wish to cross them and have the freedom to do so.

The serpent undermines the veracity and the authority of God’s negative commands by portraying them as onerous and self-serving. He thereby weakens their hold on the woman. At this point, the Bible sets up a situation of mutual opposition between obedience and subordination to God’s commands, and the independent, autonomous quest for the knowledge of good and evil needed to guide human life. To the very extent that the woman is drawn, first by the serpent and then by her own observations, to the beauty and enlightening potential of the fruit, she “forgets” about God’s command. As she gets closer to the fruit, the divine command recedes into the background. In so doing, says Strauss, the Bible “confronts us more clearly than any other book with this fundamental alternative: life in obedience to revelation, life in obedience, or life in human freedom, the latter being represented by the Greek philosophers. This alternative has never been disposed of, although there are many people who believe there can be a happy synthesis which is superior to the isolated elements: Bible on the one

side, and philosophy on the other. This is impossible. Syntheses always sacrifice the decisive claim of one of the two elements."¹¹⁶

As I complete the discussion of Strauss's understanding of the literary character of the Bible, one question remains that has not been adequately dealt with. If, as Strauss maintains in his explication of the biblical perspective, there are contradictions and mysteries that we cannot avoid confronting when we contemplate the origin of the cosmos (is the world "formed" or "created from nothing"?), and if these contradictions are microcosmically reflected in the incongruities of the biblical text, why is it that the biblical authors sometimes weave these contradictions into what appears to be a coherent whole? Why does Strauss himself not leave those contradictions alone, instead of reading certain literary units of the Bible as coherent wholes, with all the details contributing to the construction of an integrated conception? If the coherence of the Bible lies in its very incoherence—in its refusal to articulate either the cosmos or itself as a harmonious, intelligible whole—why should any editor or interpreter who wishes to be true to the biblical spirit tamper with the mysteries of the Torah?

With regard to this question, I believe Strauss provides us with both a direct and an indirect answer. His direct answer is that even though the editors of the Bible strove to transmit as much as possible from among the writings they had inherited, they nonetheless changed some things and even excluded some things that they considered dangerous, writings that could not by any stretch of the imagination be reconciled with the fundamental and authoritative teaching. Now this principle of change and exclusion in no manner resembled the principle employed by the Greek writers—who excluded absolutely all extraneous content that was not functionally necessary for the plan of their individually composed books. Still, it had enough of a formative and unifying effect on the corpus that it laid the groundwork for the traditional reading of the corpus of the Bible "as if it were a book in the strict sense." Finally, "the tendency to read the Bible and in particular the Torah as a book in the strict sense was infinitely strengthened by the belief that it is the only holy writing or the holy writing par excellence."¹¹⁷

Strauss's indirect answer to this question can be formulated, I believe, as follows. As the biblical writings were gathered and edited, the scribes and editors reflected on their meaning. While they piously trans-

¹¹⁶ See Strauss, "On the Interpretation of Genesis," 373.

¹¹⁷ See Strauss, "Jerusalem and Athens," 394.

mitted what they had received, they nonetheless thought through the implications of what they read and wrote and contrasted their inheritance with other traditions, such as the “Babylonian tradition of becoming wise in human conduct through contemplation of heaven.”¹¹⁸ They engaged in deep meditations upon memories of ancient histories, upon what they regarded as the course of Israel’s life before God under the aspect of creation and election. Biblical text, then, often consists of what Strauss has most felicitously referred to as “re-collections of re-collections.”¹¹⁹ It would seem that Strauss meant this phrase to have two meanings. The first meaning is, of course, the technical, editorial one, namely, the regathering and reediting of writings that had already been gathered and edited in the past. The second meaning, however, refers to a kind of meditation on the content of these writings: more profound rememberings of already profound rememberings.

Human beings, even those who have committed to submit themselves to God’s guidance, will try to give an account of what they see as the right life. They will try to give a rationale for their way; they will articulate it in the form of a coherent worldview and justify it in terms that can be compared and contrasted with other worldviews. As meditative reflection continues, as more “re-collections of re-collections” are thought through, gathered, and ordered, a worldview that articulates the experience of the mystery of God, the paradoxicality of religious experience, and the sense of existential dependence on God’s unfathomable will and power coupled with faith in divine justice takes form. This worldview is then cast as the opponent and antagonist of that perspective that is predicated on the values of intelligibility, independent thought, and reliance on human reason.¹²⁰ As a result of this cognitive and editorial activity, certain parts of the Bible begin to coalesce into books. It could be, so a Straussian perspective might likely conclude, that the “coherent incoherence” of the first chapters of Genesis is the result of such a process. This would justify the reading of these chapters, and others, as books.

¹¹⁸ See Strauss, “On the Interpretation of Genesis,” 373.

¹¹⁹ See Strauss, “Jerusalem and Athens,” 381–82.

¹²⁰ See Strauss’s understanding of the way the biblical writers “thought through” their position as a worldview in “Progress or Return,” 119. See also my article, “The ‘Translation’ of Judaism into the Language of Philosophy in the Thought of Leo Strauss and Emmanuel Levinas” [in Hebrew], in *IYYUN: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly* 51 (October 2002): 421–34, where I claim that Strauss undertakes a “philosophization” of Judaism, presenting Judaism as a systematic worldview, in order to cast it as an “anti-philosophy” set in opposition to Greek philosophy.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this study of the views of Franz Rosenzweig and Leo Strauss on the literary character of biblical narrative, we have found that both saw the biblical text as a kind of microcosm. If we begin with Strauss this time—he spoke of the human soul as “the only part of the whole which is open to the whole and therefore more akin to the whole than anything else is.”¹²¹ The human being, at his most human, seeks to comprehend the essence of the whole. Such a search can never be completed, however. Definitive knowledge of those realms that transcend human experience, the experience of an embodied being, is not possible to him. This realization, however, does not deter those who “love to think” from continuing their investigations in a manner proper to thinking beings. Still, the impossibility of comprehending the whole begets what Strauss has called a “charm of despair.” Perhaps this refers to the philosopher’s pleasure in the fact that his despair is the despair of the thinker, namely, a being who is engaged in an activity that is in keeping with his nature.¹²² Nonetheless, as a countercharm to this charm of despair, the human thinker creates a realm wherein he can succeed in creating the harmony he could not create in his attempt to understand the cosmos—the book. The unity and integrity of the book microcosmically reflect the unity and integrity of the cosmic system aspired to by the human thinker.

The Bible, however, deals differently with the human realization that one does not know the first and the last things. Such knowledge, so the Bible teaches, is not acquired through independent, rational search—but only by way of revelation. Now, revelation does not explain the mystery and contradictoriness of creation—rather, it leaves them in place. The element of the Bible, then, is not harmony but disharmony, mystery, and incongruity. This, however, does not detract from the Bible’s microcosmic character—it merely changes what it is about the world that is reflected in it. The biblical story is not a book in the sense of a coherent work wherein the author is sovereign over the relation of the parts to the whole. The Bible is a compilation of disparate, sometimes contradictory writings, just as the world and human life often seem irredeemably mysterious and incoherent.

For Rosenzweig, however, the microcosmic character of human

¹²¹ See Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 123, and *What Is Political Philosophy?* 39. I agree with Kenneth Hart Green that Strauss himself was sympathetic to these views. See Kenneth Hart Green, *Jew and Philosopher: The Return to Maimonides in the Jewish Thought of Leo Strauss* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 34–39.

¹²² See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. T. Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999), bk. 10, chaps. 4–9, 157–67.

works, including the Bible, is not due to the fact that they have been written by beings that are part of the whole. In Rosenzweig's thought, the turning of God to the world (creation), the turning of God to the human being (revelation), and the turning of the human being to the world (redemption)—break up the self-sufficiency and self-enclosure of these three "wholes." Neither do these three entities form a whole by being reduced to any one of them (an account of being often given in traditional philosophy). With revelation a relational universe comes into being. Therefore, any structural or microcosmic similarities that might obtain between God's works and human works do not result from the fact that man is part of God or that God is inside man. These similarities result from the fact that God and man, as discrete entities, are engaged in dialogue and communication. God and man must have certain parallel and correlative characteristics if they are to speak to each other and understand each other in one language, whether of words or actions. Both God and man, then, create epic wholes composed of parts that both form and express those wholes. Both God and man are revealed to each other in lyric, unrepeatable, present moments of meaning. These correlative structures are inscribed in both the world and in the books that bear witness to this ontological situation.

Biblical narrative, then, is that literary form wherein one can find the anecdotal, revelational moment woven into the epic wholeness of the story. This comes to sight when it appears that the epic harmony of the story has been disturbed by glaring contradictions or incongruities. By reflecting on these deliberate discrepancies, however, and by relating them to key words variously used and deployed throughout the story, fundamental existential issues surface both in the text and in the reader. For example, what is the difference between genuine revelation and illusion, between God's wishes and the wishful thinking of man? Even if there are guidelines for distinguishing between genuine and phony revelation—how are these insights to be applied to the idiosyncrasies of the reader's life?

As we have also seen, for both Rosenzweig and Strauss, contradictions play a positive rather than a negative role in biblical narrative. They are pointers to key meanings rather than indications of poor composition. For Strauss, their role is to call attention to the disharmonious and mysterious aspects of the created world and of human life. For Rosenzweig, they are an irritant that should interrupt the aesthetic absorption of the reader and elicit dormant or latent questions about life "outside" of the story.

In summarizing Rosenzweig's and Strauss's respective understand-

ings of the literary character of biblical narrative, with reference to the question I posed, perhaps somewhat playfully, in the title, I think we can further say that for both of them certain parts of the Bible have, in the course of time, become books in the sense of closed works with integrated form-content relations—on the model of what Rosenzweig would call the epic and Strauss would call a work of art. Biblical narratives, for both thinkers, present themselves, on the one hand, as exemplars of high compositional art, as works that are possessed of highly integrated part-whole and form-content structures. This result, however, has not compromised what each thinker would regard as the Bible's Jewish dimension. With regard to Rosenzweig, we have seen, by way of a close reading of his interpretation of the Balaam narrative, how he points to moments of "revelatory" questioning and insight (how do I know that this message is from God?) generated by inconsistencies in the narrative, moments that are meant to disturb, disorient, and perhaps reorient the "religious" perspective of the reader in the very course of a holistic reading of the "created" work. It would seem that for Rosenzweig, the secret of biblical narrative form can be described precisely as this uncanny synthesis between the seeming opposites of motion and rest, between the static past, created part-whole matrix of the book and the dynamic present, revealed insight that both arrests and promotes the movement of the story at the same time—that dimension that he regarded as typically, if not exclusively, Hebrew or Jewish.

With regard to Strauss, the interaction between what he considered to be the Jewish and Greek-Western aspects of biblical narrative takes place in a different way. In reading Rosenzweig, we get the impression that the template of the biblical story is its epic wholeness (representing, microcosmically, creation) with the lyric, anecdotal aspect (representing, microcosmically, revelation) incorporated within it—issuing ultimately in a genuine synthesis. In reading Strauss, however, we hear first of the dynamic dimension of reception, compilation, and possible modification or reinterpretation of holy writings, with many contradictions and repetitions left in place—this form reflecting a definite belief-content, namely, the ultimate unintelligibility and inscrutability of the divine purpose. Ultimately, however, this Hebrew or Jewish perspective becomes systematized, both theologically and literarily, enabling it to confront and challenge the opposite, Western perspective that dignifies autonomous knowledge and the intelligibility of the cosmos. In this case, what we have before us is not an organic synthesis—as with Rosenzweig, but, rather, a content that privileges mystery appearing in a form that bespeaks wisdom and intelligence—in order

that the Jewish faith in the mysterious God can be shown to be no less intelligible or plausible than the Greek privileging of autonomous knowledge. Here, too, neither the Jewish nor the Western features of biblical narrative are compromised. However, what we have in Strauss's view is not a synthesis of the two elements but, rather, grace and aptness of form serving as a handmaid to the biblical conception of wisdom—the beginning of which is humility and the fear of God.¹²³

In closing, I offer one last comparative comment concerning what Rosenzweig and Strauss, respectively, regarded as the fundamental insight proclaimed by the Hebrew Bible, as related to what they considered to be the connection between its Jewish and Western dimensions. The Bible, in Rosenzweig's conception, proclaims—not exclusively but quintessentially—a human possibility. It grants the possibility of living speech and concerned, mutually confirming dialogue—a gift conferred by divine initiative. In the biblical story, the writing, the work as written and closed, nonetheless incorporates, and in the course of reading becomes, speech: it causes questions to arise in the reader, challenges her, calls for a response, and offers a response in return. True, Rosenzweig believed that many biblical stories should be read as good literature by way of recourse to universal, humanly engendered literary forms. This literary composition, however, is also the factor that causes their unique dialogical dimension to be released. The biblical story is a story like all other stories. It has an epic, integral part-whole structure and conception like other artful, Western stories and books. The Jewish element in the Bible—the dialogical, revelational element, that aspect that engenders the event of living speech—is to be found woven into the epic and does not offer itself as an alternative to it.

Strauss, however, as we know, criticized Rosenzweig for his understanding of the Jewish dimension of the Bible, of revelation, as a bestowing and enabling dimension. In his words, “[Rosenzweig] opposed their [the orthodox] inclination to understand the Law in terms of prohibition, denial, refusal and rejection, rather than in terms of command, liberation, granting and transformation, the opposite inclination. It is not clear however, whether the orthodox austerity or sternness does not rest on a deeper understanding of the power of evil in man than Rosenzweig's at first glance more attractive view.”¹²⁴

Accordingly, Strauss saw the Bible as chiefly proclaiming not a human possibility but a series of essential human limitations. The human being does not start. Coherent understanding of God's relation to the

¹²³ See Strauss, “On the Interpretation of Genesis,” 374, and “Progress or Return,” 109.

¹²⁴ See Strauss's “Preface to Spinoza's *Critique of Religion*,” 153.

world and to man is not possible. Knowledge of the whole is not vouchsafed to human beings. The beginnings and the endings are indeterminate, uncertain, and mysterious. We have not created our situation. We must accept it and live within it, amid its many contradictions. "What we are not told, we do not know," and we must believe in, and obey, what we are told. In light of this perspective as regards content, the Bible begins as a different form of writing when compared to the Western book. It is the alternative to the Western book. It begins as a collection of received and authoritative writings, writings that must be compiled and edited. No human being begins as the author. These writings are possessed of internal differences and may contain blatant contradictions. This literary situation, however, reflects certain unavoidable features of the human situation: humans are not sovereign; the beginnings and the endings are mysterious. Nonetheless, humans do try in the course of time to reflect on these contradictions and to interpret them. Commentary on the given and the received, on the mysterious and contradictory aspects of the received—this is Jewish literature.

With time, however, as they remain in human hands and minds, certain stories nonetheless come to look more and more like Western stories, and some of the books of the Bible may even come to look more and more like Western books. But these are stories that are counterstories and books that are counterbooks.

Book Reviews

OSBORN, ERIC. *Clement of Alexandria*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xviii+324 pp. \$85.00 (cloth).

Throughout his long career, Eric Osborn has established a solid reputation in the field of patristic studies. Although he is himself a teacher of New Testament, his affinity and research interest have always extended to the early church fathers and their reflection on how to communicate the gospel to a wide audience without alienating it from the traditions in which it was reared. Osborn has been particularly attracted to Clement of Alexandria, who was the subject of his doctoral dissertation more than half a century ago. His continued interest in Clement led him to the well-timed publication of this new contribution, for which he mentions three reasons. (1) We now know much more about Middle Platonism, ranging from Philo to the Gnostics. (2) Osborn is interested in Clement's skillful use of Platonic philosophy that yet allowed him to stay a biblical theologian. Osborn's position marks a refreshing reversal of Von Harnack's traditional view of the Hellenization of Christianity, in modified form represented here by Pannenberg (47). (3) Osborn is interested in finding the reason behind Clement's "faith" in the combination of Paul, John, and Plato, a move expressing cultural optimism that he likens to Gorbachev's choice to "give the DDR away" and join Europe (xiv). It is as if Osborn pledges his own trust in the continuity of this European synthesis by elaborating the architectural role played by Clement.

After a historical introduction, the book is divided into three programmatic parts, dealing respectively with the divine plan or economy (pt. 1, 29–105), with divine reciprocity (107–53), and with faith and salvation (155–286). In the first part, Osborn sees Clement in harmony with Tertullian and Irenaeus, to whom he devoted earlier studies in 1997 and 2001, in proclaiming the primitive kerygma. Osborn compares Clement's *Protrepticus* to Irenaeus's *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, seeing Clement move beyond the latter's focus on the fulfillment of Scripture alone (34). Clement lays out a more comprehensive and complex economy of exhorting (*protreptikos*), training (*paidagôgos*), and teaching (*didaskalos*) humanity (36–39) that reflects the movement of the Logos. Osborn makes clear how in *Stromateis* I Clement defends the turn to dialectic as an internal need for the Christian community to bring coherence to Scripture. Given the wealth of Scripture citations, however, Clement is more a Platonizing Christian than a Christian Platonist (68). He uses mystery as invitation and employs Platonic symbolism to pry open or to shield (from heretics) the biblical text. A great influence on him in doing so was Philo (81–105), who strongly pointed the way for him. It is clear that Osborn prefers a careful catena-like connection between the Jewish prophets through Philo and on to Clement's Middle Platonic exegesis to the eclectic discourse power theory that he sees in the background of Dawson's book on allegorical readers in Alexandria (68 n. 38).

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The second part, "Divine Reciprocity," focuses on the relationship between the Father and the Son. Osborn uses the details of Middle Platonism to defend that Plato's first and second hypotheses in the *Parmenides* exist side by side as simple and complex unity. Clement used the relationship between One and Nous to explain the reciprocity of Father and Son as one of three so-called ellipses—the others are God and the world and man and neighbor—held together by love (147).

The third and longest part deals with faith and salvation. Its great length is fitting, inasmuch as Christian faith starts as a mustard seed but, urged on by a Scripture stronger than the Sirens, it can grow ad infinitum in reciprocity with knowledge, virtue, philosophy, and proof. For Osborn, the whole divine economy flows into one faith and one church. This embeddedness of faith in the church is central to the integrity of Osborn's project, as he regards Philo's and Clement's creative joining of prophecy and Plato as lying at the basis of European culture.

In his conclusion Osborn comes back to Clement's optimism, linking it again to a faith in the European tradition as expressed by Novalis (278). He also criticizes discourse power theory again by emphasizing the plain illocutionary force of Clement's works, thereby underscoring the interpreter's task of following him in finding "the best reason." His *Stromateis* prove fundamental in more ways than one for Osborn. It is not just Clement's concrete synthesis of scriptural and Greek philosophical language that would prove fertile but the very pattern of accomplishing such miscellanies, rather than dogmas, which he sees as offering the best hope for continuing that multifaceted yet coherent European tradition to which Clement gave such a solid foundation.

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HEVELONE-HARPER, JENNIFER L. *Disciples of the Desert: Monks, Laity, and Spiritual Authority in Sixth-Century Gaza*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005. xii+211 pp. \$39.95 (cloth).

In this groundbreaking work, Jennifer Hevelone-Harper illumines the rich complexity of social relations in and around Abba Seridos's monastery at Ta-watha through an examination of the over 850 letters that comprise the correspondence of two of its anchorites, Barsanuphius and John. Her work provides an informative, engaging interpretation of a daunting body of evidence that, in turn, makes an important contribution to an understudied form of monasticism in the Gaza region.

Disciples of the Desert advances the historical study of Christian monasticism in several foundational areas. By giving primacy to the collection of letters written by these two holy men, Hevelone-Harper situates her work within a growing body of scholarship that bears witness to a concern for balanced attention to source materials. Hagiographical accounts and exhortatory treatises have long been the subject of considerable focus and scholarly attention; the recent publication of critical editions and translations of monastic letters (often in French, though occasionally in English as well) offers another means for exploring familiar and unfamiliar dimensions of monastic life and practice. In this case, "reading the letters of Barsanuphius and John allows us to hear

ancient conversations between fathers and disciples, before they could be distilled by the hagiographer's pen into timeless, but static, pearls of wisdom" (8).

As a result, Hevelone-Harper emphasizes the distinctiveness and specificity of the social context of these anchorites. The opening chapter, "Gaza: Crossroads in the Desert," highlights the geographical location and commercial activity of the city as a stopping place on the ancient road from Egypt to Palestine as well as the religiously diverse communities of its inhabitants and the particular internal conflicts caused by doctrinal differences and ecclesiastical politics within its large Christian community. Such detail grounds the author's discussion of the rise and development of monasticism in the Gaza region, and of Abba Seridos's monastery at Tawatha, in a way that gives rightful place to its Egyptian roots. Indeed, as the author shows in the second chapter, "Tawatha: Looking for God in the Desert," the structure of the coenobium, the depiction of daily life and practice, and the relationship between the monks and society at Tawatha mirror that found in Egyptian and Palestinian monasticism. Despite these and other similarities, she argues, there is an important difference, for "Barsanuphius and his colleagues represented another stage in the development of father-disciple relationships, a stage organically connected with earlier experience but at the same time distinctive in its form" (18).

This development in the form and exercise of spiritual authority emerges from a unique network of monastic relationships bound by specific beliefs regarding spiritual direction. In subsequent chapters, Hevelone-Harper uses the evidence of the correspondence between Barsanuphius and John to reconstruct these relationships and to consider how they functioned practically in the private activity of spiritual guidance and in the public activity of monastic administration and governance. She outlines in detail the explicit division of labor that characterized governance at Tawatha wherein Barsanuphius, the "Great Old Man," and John, the "Other Old Man," exercised authority over spiritual and interpersonal issues for the monks at Tawatha and their male and female lay visitors from the solitude of their monastic cells through their letters, while Abba Seridos exercised authority, under the obedience to Barsanuphius, over administrative issues and concerns. "The three-person system of authority at Tawatha provided a safe outlet for the complaints of disgruntled members of the monastic community" (143). Consistently, the correspondence reveals the conviction that spiritual leadership was an exercise in discernment to be cultivated in humility, overseen by the Spirit, and fostered in a community of fellowship marked by mutual respect and support. As the author demonstrates, this conviction was further refined and concretized when it was shared in the communication between master and disciple (chap. 4) and in the advice given to episcopal leaders (chap. 5), as well as in those periods where it was especially challenged, as in the case of Abba Dorotheos (chap. 3) and that of the layman Aelianos (chap. 6). Like the sixth-century traveler with whom this work opens and concludes, the contemporary reader observes how spiritual authority was highly integrated into and informed by the daily life of the inhabitants of Gaza. *Disciples of the Desert* recovers a place for the words and practices contained in the correspondence of Barsanuphius and John that entices and facilitates further exploration.

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ADAMS, NICHOLAS. *Habermas and Theology*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. ix+267 pp. \$75.00 (cloth); \$29.99 (paper).

In this worthwhile book, Nicholas Adams continues theology's valuable conversation with the philosophy of Jürgen Habermas. Though it requires some background knowledge, it is clearly and accessibly written. Adams's aim is constructive, and his analysis proceeds accordingly. Overall, he asks, "How can there be argument between members of different traditions?" (1). His responses to these questions produce a book that is intriguing, illuminating, and sometimes puzzling and problematic.

It is intriguing in two ways. First, it seeks to foster a conversation about narrative and argument that will appeal "to loyal readers of [Stanley] Hauerwas and [John] Milbank" and "to loyal readers of Reinhold Niebuhr and David Tracy" (205). Adams blurs the distinction between narrative and argument by proposing what he calls "scriptural reasoning" (239) as a form of interreligious dialogue. I suspect that narrative loyalists will find his proposal more satisfactory than will the fans of Niebuhr. Second, Adams engages Habermas's thought in an interesting way. One might say that he "tunnels beneath" some of Habermas's central themes and "drills up" to offer fresh perspectives. For instance, Adams offers illuminating analyses of the ideal speech situation, Habermas on translation, Habermas and Hegel, and the Habermas-Gadamer debate. Also, he insightfully notes that "Habermas rejects . . . an 'ontology of violence' (Milbank) and instead insists that the rational alternative to coercion is consensus" (80).

Yet, along with its insights, this book is sometimes puzzling and problematic. This is because Adams, unlike Habermas, ultimately sides with narrative, authority, and tradition over argument and reason. For instance, Adams puzzlingly remarks that "it is not a matter of choosing Habermas or Gadamer, but [rather] . . . of placing the authority of traditions under a greater authority," namely, God (206). But how can one know whether this "greater authority" even exists or what normative prescriptions it authorizes other than by appealing to reason, experience, or to the authority of some tradition? For Habermas, as Adams notes, religion is inescapably "metaphysical" insofar as it makes truth claims about the nature of reality as such. Religion's basic problem is that we now live in a postmetaphysical age. Adams agrees that we live in such an age, but he denies that religion is intrinsically metaphysical. Instead, he proposes a "post-metaphysical" theology (238). "The task for theologians," he claims, "is to muddy the clear opposition between narrative . . . and argument" (216). This approach, however, muddles the situation, as becomes evident in his proposal.

Instead of seeking to achieve rational consensus on validity claims among diverse voices, Adams offers "scriptural reasoning" as an alternative model for public conversation. Adherents of different religious traditions—primarily Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—come together to read each other's authoritative narratives "as scriptures, i.e., as holy books authoritatively teaching about God and world" (241). Though this practice is desirable, it is too limited to substitute for rational discourse. First, it precludes secular voices from meaningful participation. Nonreligious adherents can attend, but they are "treated as honoured guests rather than as participants" (241). This is the case because acceptance of authoritative narratives is the basis of the practice. Second, scriptural reasoning seeks to understand other religious traditions, including their

internal diversity, but it does not seek to assess their fundamental truth claims. Yet, as Habermas rightly recognizes, one cannot ultimately take religious traditions seriously if one does not take their metaphysical truth claims seriously.

Adams is unwittingly ambivalent here about the relation between truth claims and the authority of traditions. At one point, he states that "participants . . . acknowledge no authority above that of their own tradition other than the authority of God" (244). Earlier, he suggests that scriptural reasoning presupposes the "recognition that each [tradition] worships the one true God" (243). Later, he observes that scriptural reasoning implicitly "denies . . . the sufficiency of any one tradition." Yet, he immediately circumscribes this by insisting that this "cannot possibly mean (for me) that Christianity is . . . [somehow] insufficient, and Islam is more sufficient." To ever acknowledge this would exclude one from the practice since it forfeits "the very difference between us that makes such study possible" (249).

Adams keeps appealing to the "authority of God" as an ultimate check on the authority of traditions. Yet, given his postmetaphysical stance, he has no way of speaking about God other than through the particularity of a tradition. Over against Adams and Habermas, I would suggest that a neoclassical metaphysical theology, such as offered by Schubert Ogden, offers a critical way forward—one that takes the truth claims of diverse religions seriously in the context of rational public discourse. In sum, Adams's book is worthwhile but wanting.

WILLIAM J. MEYER, *Maryville College*.

JENNINGS, THEODORE W., Jr. *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul: On Justice*. Cultural Memory in the Present. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006. 219 pp. \$55.00 (cloth); \$19.95 (paper).

Theodore W. Jennings Jr. seeks to save Paul the social revolutionary from his canonical sequestration by imperial Christendom. But, rather than appropriate the saint for Marxism (as has recently been attempted by Slavoj Žižek, Alain Badiou, and Giorgio Agamben), Jennings, like John Caputo in *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida* (Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997]), deconstructs traditional readings of Paul in order to convert theological conversation more earnestly toward questions of justice. At his most forthright, Jennings discerns in Paul a foundational thinker of authentic democracy, a "democracy as an inclusive sociality characterized by difference without division or domination and thus by justice" (168). Jennings's reading of Paul's letter to the Romans is provocative. He finds the linguistic roots of justice (*dike*) beyond the usual English rendering of the word "righteousness." He refigures Paul's insistence on faith as a previously unheard call to faithfulness to justice as such. This justice as such transcends and thus critiques the very laws it founds. Such an "impossible justice" refuses the complacency of any "good conscience," requires constant reflection and reformation, and would call forth our just actions.

Whether such a vision of justice is genuinely Pauline, however, we do not know, because, where Jennings might have argued by a sustained close reading of the entire epistle and by explicitly contesting the text's traditional reception, he instead labors to coordinate chosen fragments of Romans with as-

sorted reflections from the texts and footnotes of the later Derrida. This results in his book's awkward plotting, along with a prose style that, though not cluttered by jargon, is syntactically complicated by anxious self-qualifications.

Of course, whether or not Jennings's vision of justice is genuinely Pauline is less important than whether or not it is sensible. "A commitment to justice inevitably takes the form of making the call or claim of justice effective, intelligible, applicable to the social order. If it does not do this, the commitment to justice remains purely speculative, a merely utopian view" (30). Jennings promises to reassess Paul's thought "in the same way that the cogency of other philosophical contributions are to be assessed; that is, without appeal to his presumed authority either as a vehicle of revelation or as a founder of an institution" (5). This tact is undermined, however, when Jennings, assessing the "philosophical contributions" of Derrida, uncritically accepts their cogency. Ironically, he seems to grant Derrida the authority he would deny Paul. He never assesses Paul's thought so much as praises Paul for how well his words can be parsed to prefigure Derrida's pronouncements on gift, hospitality, and forgiveness. Following Walter Benjamin, Derrida takes "the messianic" as his master trope for thinking about justice. Indeed, Jennings claims Derrida's messianic speculations as our only hope to understand "the history of the West" as "the history of atrocity" (156), our only hope for justice. Yet "the messianic" remains elusive, inexplicable, irreducible, at best the object of allusion. Thus deconstruction, when it aims to be constructive, declares its theoretical basis to be baseless and its practical program to be utopian.

The only question of justice directly addressed is the practical historical consequences of our misreading Paul—crusades, inquisitions, conquests, and holocausts—"a history," as Jennings says, "written in blood" (156). To save Paul from his historical legacy, Jennings disassociates him from traditional theology and distances him from Jesus as Christ or from any exclusive identification of Jesus as messiah. Yet the vision of justice that Jennings finds nascent in Romans remains inchoate and unpersuasive. Jennings denies the faith that Augustine, Luther, Pascal, and Barth all found in Paul, yet his faithfulness to messianic justice rather than to Jesus merely amounts to postmodern fideism, another revelation requiring another apology and evangelization. Despite (or ironically due to) Jennings's reading of Derrida, Paul's thoughts on justice are no clearer and no more helpful, leaving us to wonder: if it is justice we seek—a "justice effective, intelligible, applicable to the social order"—then perhaps we would do better to quit reading Derrida and stop thinking about Paul.

CHRISTIAN SHEPPARD, *University of Chicago*.

SMITH, JAMES K. A. *Speech and Theology: Language and the Logic of Incarnation*. New York: Routledge, 2002. xii+186 pp. \$41.95 (paper).

Though not as significant a source of inspiration (and polemic) as he was to the Reformation, Augustine continues to provide a source for creative and critical work in phenomenology. The recent translation into English of Heidegger's early lectures on religion provided an occasion for American scholars to note the influence of Augustine (as well as Kierkegaard and Luther) on the development of phenomenology, and it helps explain some of the ways Augustinian themes continue to resonate in the field. But phenomenological work on Augustine has moved well beyond his relation to Heidegger, and

Smith exemplifies this trend. His book is a good contribution to this ongoing scholarship, taking up the important theme in phenomenology of the incommensurability between conceptual language and nonconceptual experience, described variously by Heidegger's facticity, Jean-Luc Marion's *Gxd*, Derrida's *différance*, and Levinas's Other.

Smith formulates the problem of incommensurability in terms of the categories of transcendence and immanence: conceptual knowledge requires an immanent reduction of the other (e.g., the other person, nonconceptual experience, etc.) to the concept, but the other requires transcendence from the concept in order to retain its status as other. Can conceptual language describe nonconceptual experience without reducing it to a concept? For Smith, this problem is exacerbated because the reduction is also a form of violence, forcibly moving the other from a particularity that transcends the concept to an immanent presence grasped by the concept. The quandary is that bridging transcendence is an epistemological requirement for conceptual knowledge, but the maintenance of transcendence is an ethical demand. Can both be achieved? Must we settle either for knowledge through violence or for ignorance—allowing nonconceptual experience to remain untouched by the concept and so also unknown to conceptual thought?

Smith argues that a new phenomenology grounded on an "incarnational model" of language, which takes its cue from Augustine, is necessary to address the problem of incommensurability. He characterizes his use of the Incarnation as metaphorical because he is not interested in the christological or soteriological issues at stake. Rather, he wants to use the way transcendence and immanence are brought together—united without reducing one to the other (i.e., Nicene orthodoxy)—to solve the epistemological (and ethical) problem of how conceptual reference to nonconceptual experience is possible without reducing experience to the concept. This involves Smith in forging, not altogether successfully but nevertheless provocatively, a position between philosophy and theology, which he describes as philosophical theology or fundamental theology. Smith claims an ambitious scope of application for his model of language: "I will argue that it is the Incarnation which is both the paradigm and condition of possibility for the proper understanding of language in general and theological language in particular" (154).

The argument of the book proceeds from a critical, historical account of language and signification in the phenomenological tradition to Smith's own constructive proposal. The first two chapters trace the development of signification from Husserl's "appresentation" to its critical revision, first in Heidegger's "formal indication" and then in French phenomenology—Levinas (face of the other), Derrida (*différance*), Marion (saturated phenomenon). Smith does an admirable job of treating this historical trajectory in a critical and coherent fashion, accessible to the nonspecialist, without reverting to a teleological account of it. He endeavors to retrieve Husserl and the early Heidegger through the later French critique, in which it is argued that both Husserl and Heidegger reduce transcendence to immanence—Husserl to the transcendental ego and Heidegger to being. For Smith, the epistemological imperative for immanence must be achieved without violating the ethical imperative to respect transcendence. The early Heidegger—prior to *Being and Time* and the attempt at a fundamental (universal) ontology—is important in this regard. Smith devotes the third chapter to the early Heidegger's account of facticity (i.e., everyday, pretheoretical experience) and Heidegger's claim that "formal

indication," wherein the concept points to factual life but does not fully disclose it to reason, offers a way of describing factual experience without violating the pretheoretical nature of that experience. Smith claims that this points toward his own incarnational model, which he develops in the final two chapters of his book. Here he argues that Augustine's discussion of praise and confession provides linguistic strategies for speech about God (praise) and the self (confession) that preserve transcendence but grant limited immanence. He concludes that this fulfills his ambitious goal of articulating an incarnational account of language plausible in both a theological and broader philosophical context.

Speech and Theology offers a clear and succinct account of signification within phenomenology and a creative application of this account (via Augustine) to speech about God and the self. The book is well worth the read. If the text could be improved at all, it is in three areas. Foremost, the book is part of the radical orthodoxy series, but Smith's primary interlocutors are phenomenologists and Augustine. His direct engagement with scholars who are a part of the radical orthodoxy movement is incidental at best. This is not to say that Smith does not address themes important within radical orthodoxy, but his direct engagement of the movement tends to be more distracting than enlightening.

Moreover, Smith does not position his claims in relation to theology and philosophy as clearly as he might, though he is better with regard to the latter. While some recent theology has had a tendency toward obsessive concern with method, this is a text that would benefit from a greater methodological account of how exactly a metaphorical use of the Incarnation should be situated in relation to a phenomenological account of signification and a theological account of the Incarnation. By circumventing this, Smith's incarnational model may leave theologians suspicious of his *metaphorical* use of the Incarnation and philosophers suspicious of his metaphorical use of the *Incarnation*.

Finally, I am not convinced wholly by Smith's constructive turn, especially his rendering of the interiority of the Augustinian self in terms of the Kierkegaardian notion of the "essential secret." Smith rightly points out that interiority is integral to Augustine's account of confession, but interestingly his account seems to align him in some respects with the Neoplatonic trajectory laid out by Charles Taylor and Philip Cary, who emphasize the place of privacy within Augustinian interiority. By describing the Augustinian self as an essential secret, Smith is guarding a phenomenological account of first-person subjectivity he thinks is basic to an account of the self. I do not want to take issue with this per se, except insofar as describing the Augustinian self as a secret tends to evoke a notion of privacy that runs counter to the radical corporate and relational nature of the self brought to the fore by the christological, ecclesiological, and trinitarian contexts Augustine himself uses to explicate the interiority. Even if Smith only wants to use the language of Incarnation metaphorically and so avoid a theological discussion of these contexts, in engaging Augustine on the issue of the Incarnation he cannot so easily bypass the corporate and relational nature of the self and remain germane to a model of language that wishes to invoke the Incarnation, howsoever it conceives this invocation.

MATTHEW DREVER, *Chicago, Illinois.*

PAPANIKOLAOU, ARISTOTLE. *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion*. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2006. 238 pp. \$60.00 (cloth); \$25.00 (paper).

This book is part of a project to map out “the state of contemporary Orthodox theology.” Papanikolaou’s implicit goal in taking on the comparison of the two twentieth-century Orthodox theologians Vladimir Lossky and John Zizioulas is ultimately to construe another theological model based on the common feature of their work: the “realism of divine-human relations.” Papanikolaou hopes to construe a model that takes into account the valuable insights of both theologians in finding a balance between true communion and transcendence: apophaticism and the primacy of ontology over epistemology.

“Their thought is a resource for the never-ending reflection on the God who is transcendent, but who in transcending all things is not the remote God, but rather the God who is everywhere present and fills all things” (8). Despite their differences, Papanikolaou claims, the unity of their approaches is based on the primacy of ontology over epistemology. Both theologians start with the reality of communion but have slightly different theological appropriations of it. As Papanikolaou puts it, “The substantive difference, then, which exists between the theologies of Zizioulas and Lossky, between their theologies, christologies, doctrines of creation and soteriologies can ultimately be traced to a debate over the priority of ontology or apophaticism in theological expression” (6). Apophaticism is the determinate feature of Lossky’s theological epistemology; it qualifies all aspects of his thought, including his notion of person and his understanding of the Trinity. As for Zizioulas, he manages to overcome the epistemological dialectic of cataphatic/apophatic, by ontologizing epistemology toward a more liturgical grounding of theology in the encounter with the trinitarian God in the Eucharist. Papanikolaou is aware that Lossky’s “apophatic thrust” puts into question his notion of person that he tries to construct based on the Trinity. Ultimately the radical apophaticism makes a real encounter with the Triune God problematic. Papanikolaou tries to find a balance by affirming the importance of an ontological extension of theological epistemology as found in the Greek theologian (90).

The fundamental difference between Lossky and Zizioulas is most evident in the way they regard the role of the Trinity. For Lossky, the Trinity seems to be more a problem of epistemology; he is more concerned with preserving the antinomic character of the theological enterprise. Even though he has a strong notion of the Incarnation and its consequences, he is cautious not to allow the epistemological possibilities made available through it to amount to the full appropriation of the divine essence. Zizioulas preserves the ineffable, transcendent character of the Trinity but is keen on appropriating the Trinity as a fundamental ontological possibility. The immanent Trinity, experienced in the eucharistic event of the community, becomes for him the premise for theological epistemology. According to him, the liturgy of the church is an icon of the heavenly liturgy. The possibility of participation in the trinitarian life of God constitutes the basis both of an ontology of communion and of theological epistemology. “A trinitarian ontology is not to be understood on the basis of cataphatic and apophatic theology. . . . A trinitarian ontology is itself a negation of the non-being/being ontology which roots the cataphatic/apophatic distinction. The point of a trinitarian ontology is to affirm something absolute about God’s inner life based on God’s economy” (101).

The last chapter, *Trinity and Personhood*, offers a valuable clarification on the meaning of personhood. Papanikolaou could have been more critical about the way the two modern theologians appropriate trinitarian theology. That Zizioulas and Lossky derive their notions of person from the theology of the Cappadocian fathers is somewhat problematic. The contrast between nature/substance/ousia and hypostasis/prosopon/person is nonexistent for the fathers ranging from the Cappadocians to Maximus the Confessor. The fathers insist on the necessary connectedness of the two series of concepts in order to underline the harmony between particular and common within trinitarian theology and christology. Person and nature condition each other. Lossky and Zizioulas inscribe in the fathers their own concerns with modern individualism.

This book is a tour de force of conversational theology. The author offers a beautiful exercise in a "hermeneutics of charity," because, for him, critical engagement with the two theologians under discussion does not amount to deconstruction but to a fruitful and truthful encounter, which takes the "struggle" of conversation seriously. Papanikolaou's goal in this book is to construct the foundation for a vaster project that builds on the premises of the tradition but is not shy of asking fundamental questions.

ADRIAN GUTU, *Chicago, Illinois*.

PETERS, REBECCA TODD. *In Search of the Good Life: The Ethics of Globalization*. New York: Continuum, 2004. xi+228 pp. \$24.95 (cloth); \$16.95 (paper).

Having taught *In Search of the Good Life: The Ethics of Globalization* several times, I can attest that Rebecca Todd Peters's book makes an invaluable contribution to teaching and learning about globalization and theology. It is clearly written, well organized, and carefully researched and documented. In addition to working well in the classroom, Peters's book is a helpful touchstone for any religious ethicist interested in the discourses of globalization. Though there are more sophisticated analyses of the cultural dimensions of globalization, such as John Tomlinson's *Globalization and Culture* (Chicago, 1999) and Jan Nederveen Pieterse's *Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange* (Oxford, 2004), and more elaborate constructive theological proposals, such as William Schweiker's *Theological Ethics and Global Dynamics: In the Time of Many Worlds* (Oxford, 2004), I highly recommend Peters's book for undergraduate and seminary teaching.

Motivated to respond to the global linkages of economic, ecological, and social injustice, Peters aims to accomplish two primary things with her book. She seeks to clarify the multiple, rivaling discourses of globalization and to leverage a globally attuned Christian theological perspective on the good life. The book begins with a discussion of method, moves to four chapters of analysis, and then presents a constructive vision in two concluding chapters.

Peters's methodological vision has a critically applied edge, is well supported, and rightly attends to some of the epistemological issues that theological ethicists must face, though it does not advance any new perspectives. Peters identifies as a feminist liberation theologian, draws creatively from Reformed Christian theological resources, and names her project a work of public theology. Through critical appeal to select emphases from the Reformed tradition, she endeavors to "unmask" the deep ideological roots of the economic and

political positions that structure globalization (21). By leveraging theological commitments and symbols in her analyses of global dynamics and appealing to select Reformed theological emphases to unveil the deep ideological roots of global patterns, Peters nicely illustrates some of the meanings and potentials of public theology for our time.

At the same time, Peters does not exempt her theological perspective from critique. Though privileging a feminist Reformed hermeneutics, Peters understands this as a critically qualified commitment. Put differently, her methodological vision is as much an aspiration of her book as a platform for it. The warrant for any hermeneutic must be publicly negotiated, according to Peters, through a process she describes as "tested normativity" (18). Peters's articulation of this process is a suggestive application of a justificatory framework that has also been theorized elsewhere, such as in Sheila Davaney's book *Pragmatic Historicism: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century* (Albany, NY, 2000).

Peters's middle, analytic chapters are simultaneously her book's greatest strength and its weakness. Through a typological strategy, she interprets the historical background and normative features of neoliberal, developmental, earthist, and postcolonial discourses of globalization. In doing this, Peters offers a very helpful survey of the contested terrain of the theories and realities of globalization. But, as she herself confesses, typological analysis comes with built-in weaknesses, well known as the flip side of its interpretive strength. For while typologies can provide interpreters with helpful maps, the maps by definition and intent are never as densely textured as their terrain.

My concern is not that Peters is unaware of this limitation of her chosen rhetorical device. Rather, it is that when applied to a phenomenon as complex as that of economic, cultural, political, and ecological globalization, the strengths and weaknesses of typological analysis are magnified. Even as Peters's book advantageously presents a bird's-eye view of the various positions, her typological strategy inevitably includes some disadvantageous distortions. There is much more variety in theories of globalization than a typology can detail. While thicker description is not one of Peters's aims, and while she is as careful as I think she can be, it is crucial that readers of her book, and especially teachers teaching her book, be cautiously aware of the weaknesses of this kind of analysis.

This is especially the case insofar as one of Peters's ultimate hopes is to empower her readers to become creative, engaged moral and religious agents, persons committed to the increase of justice and wisdom in a complex time. She provides an example of this type of agency throughout her book and especially in her concluding chapters. But if readers, in spite of Peters's care, leave her book thinking that the various discourses of globalization stand on equal political footing because they have received equal interpretive treatment, Peters's hope and her accomplishment could both be undermined.

Agents of justice and wisdom need to be adequately equipped. Peters's *In Search of the Good Life* contributes to this equipping in two very valuable ways. For at the same time that her book serves as a vehicle for learning about globalization, and more specifically about theological ethics in a globalizing time, it can also be an occasion for teaching and learning about the moral and religious significance of our interpretive limitations.

MICHAEL S. HOGUE, *Meadville Lombard Theological School*.

NOONAN, JOHN T., JR. *A Church That Can and Cannot Change: The Development of Catholic Moral Teaching*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005. xiv+298 pp. \$30.00 (cloth); \$18.00 (paper).

John T. Noonan's works on usury, contraception, religious freedom, abortion, divorce, and bribery have set the gold standard for research in theological ethics. While sensitive to the hermeneutical context of any particular teaching, he has traced and articulated the evolution of normative teachings across cultures and history.

His research is especially compelling for Roman Catholic ethics shaped to some degree by magisterial teachings that often make the claim of inerrancy precisely through another claim: that its utterances are continuously the same and resist change, despite evidence to the contrary. Noonan's present project addresses this issue head-on: is there historical change in these teachings, and, if so, is history edifying? Does history build up the church and bring us to wisdom?

Noonan presents his investigations in six parts. In the first, he sets up his argument. The next four parts treat the evolution of four particular teachings: slavery, usury, religious freedom, and divorce. The final one is framed by maxims relevant to understanding the effects of history on moral teaching.

Noonan prefaces his treatment of slavery with a theologically troubling concept, "an unknown sin." Such a sin is an act that is not recognized for centuries as a sin but at some point becomes "regarded with horror as the blackest kind of affront to the human person and among the most serious derelictions of duty to God" (14). Slavery is the unknown sin and is treated in the second part, comprising more than half the book. The narrative is absolutely riveting.

Noonan describes a church unable to recognize slavery's sinfulness and a long-standing theological community at home with the institution, even when it is innovating the moral law. From Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, and Antoninus of Florence to John Mair and Francisco de Vitoria, the slave receives no recognition. "As masters of morality taught, the masters of slaves were moral owners of property" (61).

As incipient recognitions of the horror of slavery are reported, popes speak out while theologians and local religious leaders seem remarkably blind. For instance, in 1839, Pope Gregory XVI decries "the inhuman trade" of slavery (107), but the leading prelate in the United States, Bishop John England, asserts the lawful title to slaves, the moral theologian Francis Kenrick defends the practice of slavery, and the Jesuits of the Maryland Province actually own more than two hundred slaves. Later Pope Leo XIII issues two other denunciations against slavery, and, in a devastating diatribe against theological obtuseness, Noonan notes how Karl Rahner, in editing the teachings of pontiffs and councils for the past twenty centuries, failed to recognize any papal teaching of slavery as worthy of mention (117). Indeed, "the first categorical condemnation by the church of an institution that the church had lived with for over nineteen hundred years" is finally made in 1965 in the Second Vatican Council document *Gaudium et Spes*.

Noonan then turns to changes in the opposite direction, actions that are, in a way of speaking, no longer sinful: usury, religious freedom, and divorce. But like the issue of slavery they witness to how faith leads us, over time, to understand moral matters differently.

Noonan closes his work by offering wisdom on how history teaches us that

no one ever has a full purchase on any moral insight, that humility is an effective epistemological virtue, that development should neither be exaggerated nor denied, and, above all, that love should lead us. But Noonan leaves this moralist a bit unsettled. Declaring moral teachers from previous generations innocent for the positions they held, he explains the acquittal with an overarching assertion: "We must be judged by the moral criterion we know" (200). Did no one have a responsibility to learn what he did not yet know? Is there not any culpability for ignorance? Do not the prophets rightly condemn when we do not bother to understand? This brilliant book teaches us that, if we appreciate history, inevitably we are called to understand more than we presently know.

JAMES KEENAN, *Boston College*.

HEBBLETHWAITE, BRIAN. *Philosophical Theology and Christian Doctrine*. Exploring the Philosophy of Religion. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005. xii+176 pp. \$29.95 (paper).

Philosophy of religion in the English-speaking world exhibited a revival in the 1970s and has been flourishing since. Anglo-American philosophers of religion have produced thoughtful reflection on a variety of topics, including Christian doctrines, sometimes thought to be the exclusive province of theologians. Philosophical analysis of Christian doctrines is surveyed well in this book, which provides a useful introduction to a set of conversations theologians might be tempted to overlook.

The aim of *Philosophical Theology and Christian Doctrine* is "to survey and comment on recent work by Anglo-American philosophers of religion in the analytic tradition on the doctrines of the Christian creed" (x). Brian Hebblethwaite is well placed to provide such a survey, having worked in the field for over thirty years. The survey is broad, describing the positions taken by a large number of philosophers, as well as by several theologians and scientists. After preliminary chapters on the task of philosophical theology and on revelation, Hebblethwaite devotes a chapter each to discussions of creation, incarnation, trinity, salvation, and eschatology. The last chapter is a catchall, with brief remarks on the sacraments, the church, worship, and providence.

Despite its usefulness, the book suffers from several limitations. First is what seems to me an implicit misreading of important philosophers of religion who follow the later Wittgenstein. I say "implicit" because Hebblethwaite is careful not to commit himself explicitly to a generalized critique of all followers of Wittgenstein. Nonetheless, Hebblethwaite's reading of those philosophers of religion who make the later Wittgenstein's insights regarding language central to their program seems biased by Kai Nelson's interpretation of such philosophers as "Wittgensteinian fideists." Hebblethwaite's view of D. Z. Phillips is one such case, though Hebblethwaite is no doubt aware that Phillips has resisted such a label (see, e.g., Kai Nelson and D. Z. Phillips, *Wittgensteinian Fideism?* [London, 2005]). Hebblethwaite mentions Phillips only twice, both times while distancing himself from "necognitivist" or "fideist" understandings of religious language and noting his sympathy with necognitivist characterizations of Phillips's work (1-2, 111). This necognitivist construal of Wittgensteinian concerns also seems operative in Hebblethwaite's remarks on criticisms (by Nicholas Lash and Kenneth Surin) of David Brown's book on

the Trinity. Hebblethwaite takes their Wittgensteinian approach to philosophical theology to be fundamentally opposed to "the whole approach to philosophical theology" (82). Yet Hebblethwaite nowhere explains why such approaches are opposed to his or what he takes to be their flaws. On the other hand, ad hoc appeals to Wittgenstein seem acceptable to Hebblethwaite, such as Brown's response to Lash and Surin (82) or Peter Geach's argument that a Wittgensteinian suspicion of purely private sensations supports a view of life after death as requiring material continuity (114).

Second, Hebblethwaite views Continental philosophy in the twentieth century as tending to impose "wildly implausible generalizations on the history of ideas" (10). But this view does not appear to be based on sensitive readings of the philosophers he cites. He dismisses Heidegger, for example, for holding that "the whole western tradition of metaphysical thinking, from Plato to the twentieth century, [has] run into the sand" (10). Though not incorrect, this characterization fails to do justice to Heidegger's brilliant critique of the Cartesian cogito (see also, e.g., 50). Foucault and others get similarly swift dispatch (10). Given the limitation of his survey to Anglo-American writers, Hebblethwaite's dismissal of these important Continental thinkers might seem unimportant. Nonetheless, the last thirty years has seen increasing cross-fertilization between Continental and analytic philosophy, and analytic philosophers increasingly use the work of Continental figures. When Hebblethwaite considers these, his treatment of them is less than generous. Thus his appraisal of Merold Westphal's argument for understanding sin epistemologically: "For a Christian philosopher to appeal to Marx, Freud and Foucault in the course of castigating his fellow Christian philosophers . . . does not inspire much confidence in Westphal's judgment" (95). Such comments detract from the credibility of his evaluations overall.

Finally, although Hebblethwaite occasionally indicates his views on various issues, the book contains no development of any sustained position whatever, whether critical or constructive. The broad scope of the book, the large number of writers surveyed, and its short length (145 pages of text) prevent any such development and, moreover, require extremely cryptic descriptions of the positions surveyed. This limits the book's usefulness for course work but also yields an excellent brief introduction for theologians, philosophers, or graduate students new to the discussions of Christian doctrines among analytic philosophers of religion.

JOHN ALLAN KNIGHT, *Marist College*.

CARTWRIGHT, MICHAEL G. *Practices, Politics, and Performance: Toward a Communal Hermeneutic for Christian Ethics*. Princeton Theological Monograph Series. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006. xv+260 pp. \$28.00 (cloth); \$22.40 (paper).

Michael G. Cartwright's book focuses on the question "How is the Bible (to be) used in Christian ethics?" (1). His point of departure is the contrast between the approaches of Reinhold Niebuhr, whose ethical thought relies on formal philosophical dichotomies and who advocates a Christian realist stance, and John Howard Yoder, whose thought is couched in more biblicist language and who saw the church as a distinctive community in witness against the compromises of "Christendom" and secular culture. Matching this ethical contrast are two dichotomies in the interpretation of the Bible: the recent split between

fundamentalists who seek specific moral proof texts in Scripture and modernists who replace textual specifics with general underlying principles and the related hermeneutical dichotomy of spirit versus letter going all the way back to Augustine. Cartwright's sympathies lie with Yoder's approach in ethics, but he finds the available alternatives in biblical hermeneutics unsatisfying—hence the proposal to develop a new kind of hermeneutic to relate Bible and ethics.

The title *Practices, Politics, and Performance* indicates what the main features of this hermeneutic will be. Rather than read the biblical text as providing prescriptive moral rules for conduct, Cartwright suggests that we instead read the prescriptive texts as rules for practices (102–4), in the sense of that term made familiar by Ludwig Wittgenstein and Alasdair MacIntyre. This reading calls into question the distinction between “ethical” and “religious” actions. Rather, we are urged to view the life of the ecclesial community itself as a performance of the script set out in Scripture (91–94), in which even ceremonial features are seen as constitutive of the ethical life of Christians. Finally, Cartwright insists that the context for ethical interpretation of Scripture is not the isolated believer/reader but the community; following Yoder and Stanley Hauerwas, he views the community as posing certain political questions to Scripture and the Bible as forming a certain kind of community (77–79). For Cartwright, it is only this kind of engaged, communal hermeneutic that will get beyond the typically Western dichotomy of spirit (general principles) and letter (particular rules and texts).

But it is one thing to state theoretically that Christian ethics should apply Scripture in the context of particular communities and their practices; it is another thing actually to deliver that particularity. Cartwright sets out to specify two versions of his communal hermeneutic, devoting half the book to a detailed discussion of the uses of Scripture in the Orthodox Church and in the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition. Space does not allow for a full review, but it should be said that this concrete discussion of how biblical interpretation is actualized in communal practice represents the best part of the book. The Orthodox Church is of interest for Cartwright largely because of the way it embodies the idea that sacrament is a performance constitutive of the community, and because it has not inherited the Western obsession with distinguishing spirit and letter. For Mennonites, attention to the specifics of the biblical text issues in a community that attends to the material and practical expressions of faith. Cartwright sees in these Christian communities an alternative to the way that Scripture has been applied to Christian ethics in the West. Cartwright may be a little too willing to take “we’re different from the West” statements at face value from Orthodox or Mennonite writers living in the United States, however. He does not consider that these statements may themselves be partially apologetic constructs of a community struggling to define itself over against a dominant cultural Other.

This book is Cartwright's substantively unmodified PhD dissertation from 1988, and it suffers from the literary vices typical to that genre. There are an annoying number of typos and editing errors. Further, the line of argument has a hard time emerging out of the scholarly apparatus of excessive literature review and long narrative footnotes. Some ethnographic description of the practices of Orthodox or Mennonite communities might have bolstered Cartwright's argument more than the works of Orthodox or Mennonite academics. One might also observe that his antiformalist ethic is itself dominated by a dichotomy, that between formal and particular. In the twenty years since the

dissertation, the particularist position has itself become a dominant model guilty of its own one-sidedness; one might ask different questions about communities of interpretation today. For all this, Cartwright's book is useful for its purpose, if that purpose is to call ethicists to attend to the various forms and the specific shapes of biblical witness in Christian "Communities of Character."

GLENN WHITEHOUSE, *Florida Gulf Coast University*.

ROGERS, JACK. *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006. xiv+169 pp. \$17.95 (paper).

Jack Rogers attempts here a particular act of persuasion. He means to encourage his intended readers to undertake their own "journey" in applying Reformed theology and biblical exegesis to the "issue of homosexuality" (3). They should "walk with [Rogers] through these chapters," giving themselves "permission to consider" what he reports, rather than rejecting it beforehand (16). By the end of the journey, they should begin to see that Christian Scripture and authentic Reformed tradition require granting "homosexual people who are faithful members of our churches" full membership, including ordination and the blessing of their unions (91).

The argument of the journey can be divided into four steps. The first recounts "how the church changed its mind" about misreadings of the Christian Bible that once justified slavery and excluded women from ministry (35). It finds the lessons of the change distilled in Presbyterian guidelines for scriptural exegesis during controversy. The second step applies these principles to the principal scriptural passages that figure in debates about homosexuality and to conclusions about natural law typically drawn from them. Rogers then turns, his third step, to stories of "real" same-sex couples and their "marriages." He concludes with the history of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s (PC[USA]) legislation on homosexuality and recommendations for its prompt revision.

I suspect that much of the book's persuasive force for its intended readers comes not from what it reports, but from the fact that it is Rogers who does the reporting. He identifies himself as a recent moderator of the PC(USA) General Assembly. Most significantly, he insists that he was and is committed to an evangelical theology that offers assurance of salvation through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a confidence that "the Bible is the final authority" for Christian life (7 and elsewhere). The book's persuasion is plainly addressed in the first instance to evangelical Presbyterians. Rogers's signature on it functions as something like an endorsement by an authoritative figure (if not quite a celebrity). The book supplements the endorsement page after page by casting itself in the most familiar evangelical genres. Its tone is homiletic; its chief narrative pattern is the personal testimony or witness. It is the ardent story of a graced transformation in someone who was once just like the reader.

It is inappropriate to judge such an explicitly rhetorical book except by its rhetorical effects. It would not be fair, I think, to judge it by the usual scholarly criteria, to ask whether it offers novel interpretations or reliable contributions or unexpected corroborations. This is not a work of novelty, though Rogers himself seems unaware just how old some of the material actually is (cf. 13). Rogers's historical analogies are presented clearly and forcefully but also as settled history rather than as freshly corrected or corroborated research.

If the book is to be judged instead by its rhetorical effectiveness, its real reviewers will be those among its intended readers who are persuaded by it—or precisely not. Perhaps an outsider can still raise two questions about the presuppositions of such an effort at persuasion. One presupposition is that inferring the right principles for exegesis from recent progress in church history will change hearts and minds. “Upholding our best principles and practices in interpreting the Bible will help us to move forward together as a community of faith” (51). This confidence claims a capacity to identify and correct causes of earlier distortions in interpretation. But the causes that Rogers identifies are curiously superficial: “Scottish Common Sense philosophy and the Scholastic theology of Francis Turretin” (30; cf. 32, 34). A historian less committed to “Whiggish” history might ask whether there aren’t deeper causes for distorting Scriptures, such as unholy collusions between ecclesial and societal powers—or original sin. Indeed, Rogers himself concedes that good rules of exegesis are ignored at present because “people [are] already entrenched in [their] positions” (54). The salient rhetorical question is why they live in those trenches—and whether they can be moved out of them by words.

A rather different question for this project of persuasion might be whether the future belongs to programs of denominational persuasion. Certainly, queer Christian theology has moved beyond most denominational quarrels. What is more important, many queer Christians think of themselves as belonging primarily to Christian networks that cut across denominational lines. For some, this is a Queer Church in analogy to a transdenominational Black Church. For others, it is a stubborn hope for an eschatological *ekklesia* that will not much resemble the present mainline bodies, welcoming or not.

MARK D. JORDAN, *Emory University*.

LAWRENCE, BRUCE B. *New Faiths, Old Fears: Muslims and Other Asian Immigrants in American Religious Life*. American Lectures on the History of Religions. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002. xvi+197 pp. \$65.00 (cloth); \$20.00 (paper).

This challenging book, growing out of a series of lectures sponsored by the American Academy of Religion, considers how religion reinforces “racialized class prejudice” in American society (10). While much of the book was formulated before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, heightened anxieties since those attacks only highlight the importance of Bruce Lawrence’s subject. Against the dominant Anglo-Protestant cultural and political order in America, which Lawrence assumes is fundamentally racist, he proposes a new model for the place of Asian Muslims and other immigrants in America. He finds current multicultural theory inadequate to the task and thus suggests two neologisms to represent an ideal status for immigrants’ voices and power within society. The first term is “polyvalence,” which “connotes the many as equivalent to the one” as well as “negotiated equivalence without guaranteed permanence” (9). Polyvalence acknowledges endless variation and difference, even within religious and cultural communities, without accepting the use of difference to enforce exclusion and disenfranchisement.

Lawrence’s second new term which he recommends for a new vision of American society is “kaleidoculture.” He believes that this term makes a stronger value judgment about America’s many cultures than typical multicultural

lingo does, as kaleidoculture “evokes a changing spectrum of cultural values and experiences, each set of which is bright and scintillating” (9). He also calls kaleidoculture “a porous container of fungible subgroups of Americans” (45). As one can see by these terms and definitions, this is a book heavy with ambitious theory. Lawrence’s theory is often not matched with much evidentiary grounding. Perhaps this lack of grounding is appropriate to a brief book emerging from a series of lectures, however. Some readers will occasionally find that his dense theoretical language makes the book difficult to understand, while others may conclude that he makes overgeneralized assertions about the moral deficiencies of American society. Hopefully, however, all will recognize the legitimacy of Lawrence’s contention that markers of religious identity complicate, and often make more intractable, race and class prejudices in America.

Lawrence seeks to emphasize the role of religion in demarcating structures of inequality in America, but he insists that religion is mistakenly portrayed as homogeneous and static by scholars across a spectrum from multiculturalists such as Diana Eck to the defenders of Anglo-Protestant culture such as Samuel Huntington (both of whose work Lawrence repeatedly addresses). He argues that homogeneous views of religion, class, and race invariably crumble when one considers the actual situations of specific Asian immigrants. An interesting chapter on Iranian immigrants in Los Angeles makes the point: according to one study, perhaps as few as 2 percent of the city’s large Iranian population practice Islam. They are keenly aware of their inherited Shi’i Muslim and Iranian culture yet have no intention of ever returning to Iran, particularly with the current political situation there. They eagerly embrace Anglo consumer culture. Their options for lifestyle, consumption, and information are only made more kaleidoscopic by their location in a great world city (large cities are home to most of the new Asian immigrants). These immigrants and most others are situated liminally between a variety of cultures and nations, and attempts to categorize them in homogenized ways usually serve some subtle (or not so subtle) prejudiced purpose.

Lawrence is convinced that kaleidoculture is the morally superior path that America should take, replacing the norms of Anglo-Protestant political hegemony. Lawrence knows that accepting kaleidoculture would not create a conflict-free utopia but rather a freer, fairer America that acknowledges difference while not manipulating difference for oppressive ends. “Everyone has a chance to be a winner” in kaleidoculture, Lawrence proclaims (141). I wonder how many of the religiously faithful in America—including those among Asian immigrants—desire what Lawrence is offering? Even the most irenic believers among Christians and Muslims still generally believe their faith is exclusively true, and many anticipate an eschatological scenario in which God will triumph over his enemies. We cannot just dismiss these types of believers as fundamentalists, as Lawrence seems quick to do to those who promote normative religious views. Is there any place, then, in Lawrence’s kaleidoculture for America’s practicing monotheists? I do not believe that Lawrence adequately addresses these questions in this slim volume, but his timely book does well to raise these issues and many others about religion, prejudice, and the place of immigrants in American society.

THOMAS KIDD, *Baylor University*.

HEILMAN, SAMUEL. *Sliding to the Right: The Contest for the Future of American Jewish Orthodoxy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. ix+363 pp. \$60.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

Sliding to the Right analyzes the rightward move of American Jewish Orthodoxy during the past several decades. These years have seen within Orthodoxy the ostracism of non-Orthodox Jewish religious movements, a growing skepticism toward secular Jewish scholarship and university study, a rejection of interreligious dialogues with Gentiles, an emphasis on the study of Talmud as the be-all and end-all of Jewish learning, a dismissal of the accommodationist attitude toward modernity of earlier Orthodox leaders, a continual raising of the standards for religious observance, and a shift in power from pulpit rabbis to the heads of the American Talmudic academies in Brooklyn, Cleveland, Chicago, Baltimore, and Lakewood, New Jersey. This shift rightward among the Orthodox has occurred in Europe and Israel as well.

But in America, as Samuel Heilman notes, this move has been accelerated by some of the same social and cultural factors that have pushed other American religious groups, most notably some evangelical Protestant churches, in a more fundamentalist direction. American Orthodox leaders of a half century ago would not have predicted, nor would they have welcomed, this slide to the right into obscurantism and fundamentalism. Midcentury sociologists also would have rejected the possibility of East European-style Orthodoxy prospering in the seemingly uncongenial American social and intellectual milieu. But prosper it has, and Heilman perceptively shows why. Ironically, this move to the right by those claiming to respect Jewish tradition necessitated ignoring or rejecting much of what had been normative to previous Orthodox generations. Contemporary Orthodoxy, and this is particularly true of American Orthodoxy, is *sui generis*, and this is one reason why it interests sociologists such as Heilman, anthropologists, and historians.

Heilman, an Orthodox Jew and an insightful student of American Jewry, explores in this volume some interesting sociological aspects of the contemporary American Orthodox as they strive to get a piece of the American dream while raising the social and ideological barriers of their cloistered communities. Over half of *Sliding to the Right* examines Machon L'Parnasa, a school in Brooklyn providing vocational training for Jews who refuse to attend college out of fear of ideological contamination; the role that humor plays among young Orthodox men and women; and the significance of posters found in Orthodox neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens. While interesting, these chapters do not clearly relate to the purported theme of the book as expressed in either its title or its subtitle, and they give the book a disjointed and episodic quality. The founding of Machon L'Parnasa, for example, would seem to indicate a move to the left, not to the right, since the school was criticized by Orthodox sectarians for providing a potential entry into the general culture.

Sliding to the Right focuses almost entirely on Orthodoxy in New York City. This is understandable since the city contains a majority of the American Orthodox population and most of the major institutions of American Orthodoxy, and Heilman lives in a New York suburb and teaches at the Queens College and the City University of New York. But this New York centrism is at the expense of slighting Orthodoxy in the Sunbelt and elsewhere. South Florida, for example, has over six hundred thousand Jews, 8 percent of whom identify with Orthodoxy. Metropolitan Los Angeles also has six hundred thousand Jews

and a thriving Orthodox community. While Orthodoxy in the Sunbelt shares many of the characteristics of New York Orthodoxy, there are also significant differences, and it would have been helpful had Heilman explored these.

Sliding to the Right is very much a work of sociology, and it does not probe the contemporary ideological debate among prominent Orthodox rabbis and intellectuals over the future of American Orthodoxy. This involves differences over the interpretation of religious texts, the role of philosophy and history in understanding Jewish law, and the place of critical scholarship in the traditional Jewish curriculum. This debate is, in part, a product of the crisis of morale within what is termed "centrist" Orthodoxy combined with the confidence within sectarian Orthodoxy that the future of American Orthodoxy rests with them. Even Yeshiva University, whose self-proclaimed *raison d'être* is the synthesis of Orthodoxy and modernity, has moved to the right. Recent graduates of Orthodox seminaries, including those of Yeshiva University, either have been sympathetic to the Orthodox Right or are intellectually ill equipped to confront its challenges. This has led to the great paradox of contemporary American Orthodoxy, particularly within centrist Orthodox communities in suburbia, of congregants whose religious praxis is antithetical to the ideology of their rabbis.

EDWARD S. SHAPIRO, *Seton Hall University*.

MASTROCINQUE, ATTILIO. *From Jewish Magic to Gnosticism*. Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 24. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005. 244 pp. €59.00 (paper).

As the title of this volume suggests, Attilio Mastrocinque attempts a historical trajectory tracing the relationship between ancient Jewish magic and Gnosticism—as broad and ambitious as that enterprise may seem—in a compact dissertation rich in its citations both ancient and modern. Whereas the control of the secondary works is strongest in the area of magic, the author's undisputed forte, there is also a wealth of works principally dealing with religious and Gnostic themes. The author's erudition and breadth of knowledge is, in many respects, matchless, but whether he is able to achieve his goal of bringing clarity to the complex field of the interrelationships among magic, Gnosticism, Christianity, and Judaism remains to be seen.

Sixty-seven numbered chapter-"paragraphs" (too numerous to list here) are subsumed under ten larger chapters, which are not numbered: "The Marcionite Snake," "Ophite Doctrine," "A Snake in the Sky," "Chnoubis the Serpent God," "The Ophite Diagram," "Asia Minor and Egypt: The roots of Gnosis," "The Snake at the Highest Point of the Universe," "The Decan of the Astronomical Pole," "Aberamentho," and "Magic and Christianity." The book finishes with a bibliography and indices.

From these major chapter headings, one can see that the major theme of Mastrocinque's work is the study of the snake (*ophis*, *drakôn*) in Gnostic and magic sources, with principal emphasis on the appearance of the serpent on ancient gemstones, in its multifarious forms (Chnoubis, *ouroboros*, *Glykôn*, etc.). But Mastrocinque starts first with some fascinating "serpent" accounts from little appreciated literary sources such as Theodoretus of Cyrrhus and the Prayer of Cyriacus. Weaving together a web of texts from Gnostic groups as diverse as the Naassenes, Ophites, Carpocratians, Basilidians, Nicolaites, and

Peratae—not to mention the more standard fare of Valentinians and Sethians—Mastrocinque attempts to integrate a rather complex welter of oft-times unmanageable sources (Patristic, Gnostic, Jewish, Christian, magic) into a singular, or almost singular, unifying whole, although it is not always clear exactly what the author's underlying thesis really is; one soon finds himself lost in the maze. The advertised thesis given on the book's back cover is symptomatic of the problems involved with the author's presentation of the material: "Attilio Mastrocinque examines the intriguing link between magic and Gnosticism. There were two main reasons why Christian thinkers identified Gnosticism with magic: the fact that the roots of Gnosticism lay in the Hellenistic Judaism influenced by the Chaldeans and the Magi, and the need felt by orthodox Christians to distinguish themselves from Christian Gnostics by proving that the latter were magicians." If this paragraph requires two (or more) readings to understand exactly what was being said, it comes as no surprise; like much of the book, this précis brings assumptions to the discussion that are never fully established: Do the roots of Gnosticism indeed lay in a "Chaldean"- and "Magi"-influenced Hellenistic Judaism? Who were "the Chaldeans"? Who were the "Magi"? How is it that the "orthodox Christians" did indeed distinguish themselves from Gnostic Christians? This reviewer did not come away with a clear sense that these questions were satisfactorily answered. (Did the author convincingly identify the "roots" of Gnosticism in Egypt and Asia Minor? Can a single plant have two roots? Are we even dealing with a single "plant"? More, for example, could have been said on the ancient Mandaean and on possible Iranian origins.) Some of the problems lie in the obscurity of the sources discussed (e.g., little-understood Gnostic groups); another problem rests in the fact that the argumentation does not always proceed carefully from one point to the next.

To cite one random example, out of many, on page 189, the author presents a diagrammatic outline of Papyri Graecae Magicae (PGM) II. 105–118 in his section titled "The Four Aspects of Aberamentho"—an outline that includes a description of the fourfold division (of the Red Sea) into West, South, North, and East, with corresponding divine and animal forms. In the spell, the palindromic name Aberamentho occurs (which the author rightly connects with Jesus, in the *Pistis Sophia*)—along with dozens of other magical names and syllables (including, by the way, Kommes, called "the greatest god," who is left undiscussed). No particular prominence in the spell is accorded this particular magic name; nonetheless, the author chooses here to divide the name, rather arbitrarily, into four parts to match the four directions of the compass and thereby give the name its fourfold aspect: "The four parts of the palindrome, therefore, correspond exactly to the sun god's four aspects in the four sectors of the cosmos" (189). That might have worked had the palindromic name been mentioned alone, alongside the four cardinal points. Instead, you have the following: "most powerful god, Kommes, Kommes, IASPHE IASPHE BIBIOU BIBIOU NOUSI NOUSI SIETHON SIETHON ARSAMOSI ARSAMOSI NOUCHA NOUCHA E EI OMBRI THAM BRITHIAOTH ABERAMENTHOOUTH-LERTHEXANAXETHRELUOOTHNEMAREBA." This whole list is invoked in the spell as "the most great and mighty god" (PGM II.123–26), and nothing here is said of the four cardinal points. Such a method of argumentation, then, does not inspire confidence in the author's overall approach.

With that said, there is much, too, to commend the work, not the least of which is the broad scope of knowledge that the author exhibits. The volume

is a true thesaurus of magical material with a wide range of specialized, secondary literature that any specialist in *magica* might easily have missed, and for this reason alone it belongs in every library of those working in the field of magical literature. The work is also important in raising the issue of the relationship between Gnosticism and the various corpora of magical texts, including the erstwhile "Gnostic" gemstones. In the end, the breadth of the author's voluminous familiarity with the subject renders the book more valuable as a compendium, of magical materials, rather than as a contribution sustaining a workable historical thesis.

A final word about the production of the book, the blame for which must rest with the publishers, not the capable author, who is a prominent figure in the study of magical (and other) literatures: in the first copy sent for review, the following pages were printed entirely blank: 2–3, 6–7, 10–11, and 14–15. After a request for a second review copy, the same problem occurred but with a different set of pages: 193, 196–97, 200–201, 204–5, and 208. Furthermore, especially early on, a number of the footnotes appear on pages just before or just after their respected references in the body of the text. These seem to be avoidable problems; otherwise, the production of the book is handsomely typeset with numerous figured drawings, diagrams, and embedded photographs.

ROY KOTANSKY, *Santa Monica, California*.

KRUPNICK, MARK. *Jewish Writing and the Deep Places of the Imagination*. Edited by JEAN K. CARNEY and MARK SHECHNER. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005. xvii+393 pp. \$26.95 (cloth).

Mark Krupnick, who had been professor of religion and literature at the University of Chicago Divinity School, was always a critic's critic, writing on thinkers as disparate as Lionel Trilling and Jacques Derrida. His last book, *Jewish Writing and the Deep Places of the Imagination*, completed days before his death due to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease), is a collection of seventeen essays, some published previously (and revised for this edition), others written during the final years of his life. The compilation is helpfully framed with a foreword by Jean K. Carney, Krupnick's wife, and an afterword and biographical summary by Mark Shechner, which place the essays within the context of Krupnick's longtime interests and career.

The core of the book is composed of a series of essays on "the New York intellectuals," a group of writers and critics, mostly secular Jews, associated with such journals as the *Partisan Review* and engaged in a midcentury drama of assimilation and acculturation. These essays present critical and sometimes intimate portraits of Lionel Trilling, Alfred Kazin, Irving Howe, and Krupnick's academic mentor Philip Rahv. Coming from the non-Stalinist Left but increasingly alienated by the New Left of the 1960s, often working at the margins of the academy, these critics were not only important commentators on literature but also helped forge a modern American Jewish identity. Krupnick regards them as "culture rabbis," whose "Jewishness" served not as a religious but as a cultural sensibility. In the introduction, Krupnick confesses, "I read the literary critics among them to learn how to read and think about literature and thereby how to think about life" (4).

In his earlier studies, Krupnick focused on the political and cultural aspects

of their lives and work. What brings these later essays together is an ardent focus on what Krupnick, echoing Trilling's pregnant phrase, calls "the deep places of the imagination," where imagination is understood as "a fusion of ideas with fantasy and emotion" (12). For Krupnick, these "deep places" contain "issues of the self: its wounds, its commitments, and its way of negotiating the complicated relationships that exist among its needs, the texts one studies, the social-cultural context, and the complex of dominant fantasies, drives, and emotions that underlie more accessible matters" (9). Krupnick's analyses are therefore not guided so much by theory as by the literary life itself.

Throughout the book, one hears a lament for this lost world of literary criticism, for critics that are nowadays "discounted because of their lucidity" (195), for a form of engagement less theoretical, more down to earth and personal than one finds in much of contemporary academic writing on literature. Krupnick's book serves as a reminder of the moral purpose of criticism, summed up in the Yiddish word *Menschlichkeit*—a purpose that is often lost in the thickets of prose that today pass as "theory."

Despite the sometimes nostalgic tone of these essays, Krupnick does not pull his punches. There is some settling of accounts, especially with Diana Trilling, with whom he had a particularly difficult relationship. But it is in the essays on Cynthia Ozick, Philip Roth's novels, and Geoffrey Hartmann's work on Holocaust testimonies, and in the pieces that deal directly with his medical condition, that Krupnick achieves his most powerful, and most poignant, prose. In his essay on Ozick, for example, Krupnick looks beyond the polemical writer and novelist to discover an oft-thwarted desire, feminine vulnerability, and sense of humiliation in her biographical essays on Virginia Woolf, Edith Wharton, and former friend and literary rival Alfred Chester. In the collection's first essay, "'A Shit-Filled Life': Philip Roth's *Sabbath's Theater*," Krupnick's steely-eyed gaze is focused upon Roth's riotous novel. Roth "has increasingly found loss, humiliation, and death at the heart of things" (15), yet the performance is paradoxically life affirming. The loss of dignity that the novel tracks is an act of artistic self-liberation. (One wonders what Krupnick would have made of Roth's more recent book *Everyman*, a portrait of the failing body.) Such a work, emerging from "the deepest springs of [Roth's] being" (30), Krupnick suggests, is more powerful and aesthetically successful than those novels in which Roth attempts to wear the hat of social critic.

Krupnick's own moral vision breaks through most powerfully in "Revisiting Morrie: Were His Last Words Too Good to Be True?" his lacerating, heart-breaking, and hilarious essay on Mitch Albom's best-selling *Tuesdays with Morrie*, the account of a fellow ALS sufferer. Krupnick criticizes the book's "uncritical," "nonjudgmental stance" and Morrie's schmaltzy homilies and "light-minded New Age spirituality," a moral sensibility that he sums up with the word "kitsch" (256, 258, 259). In this essay, and in the transcribed retirement address, Krupnick patiently explains the brutal physical and emotional suffering of the ALS patient, the encroaching frustration and isolation, helplessness and despair, the enormous weight placed on family and friends, the yearning for support and glimmerings of love.

In his complaint against Albom, Krupnick remarked that "a better book would probe the varieties of love: gratitude, tenderness, loyalty, the fierceness and intensity that do not suddenly disappear with one's capacity for speech, the joy in the presence and happiness of one's loved ones, the affection and concern for one's offspring" (260). At their best, Krupnick's writings achieve

a remarkable balancing act between the expression of real suffering and bracing—indeed, sometimes wicked—humor. At such moments, the critic reveals himself also to be an artist. Full of sage advice on how to engage literature, and therefore life itself, Krupnick's last collection is indeed such a better book. JEROME COPULSKY, *Virginia Tech*.

McNULTY, TRACY. *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007. liii+280 pp. \$72.00 (cloth); \$24.00 (paper).

McNulty approaches hospitality not merely as a central category for religion, statehood, civilization, and law but for its inherent tension, its "obligation both to integrate the foreigner and at the same time to respect him, her, or it as foreign," which makes hospitality a fulcrum for consideration of Jacques Lacan, the true subject and guiding presence of this book. For McNulty, a student of Jacques Derrida and Jean-François Lyotard, the role of the feminine within hospitality—particularly woman as property self-identified with the husband/host, given to the guest as a part of him—highlights the impossible, aporetic limits at stake in such relation and emphasizes the lack of any transcendental guarantee to signification or identity. *The Hostess* offers a series of readings exploring the notion of "gay savoir" or "feminine knowledge," beginning with a Lacanian analysis of "Genesis hospitality," wherein Sarah's incredulous laughter at the promise of pregnancy "insists upon an inadequation to God's word and a disbelieving relation to the promise it sustains. If Eve is the one who incites Adam to forget that he cannot have knowledge, and who urges him to prove his mastery by taking on God himself, then Sarah is the one who redeems this 'wicked emancipation' by opposing to it another kind of knowledge . . . one that concerns the ungroundedness of the signifier, the misrecognition that presides over the transmission of the divide word: in other words, the impossibility of 'all' of the truth being transmitted" (236).

Just as the church fathers searched the Hebrew Bible for symbolism assumed to be hidden therein, their readings predetermined by their theology, so too is McNulty's Lacanian reading, however beautiful and compelling it may be. Sarah's famous laughter "underscores the incommensurability of God and man" (xlv). The sin of attempting to "know" God in Eden or Babel is countered by Abraham and Sarah's hospitality, which "constructs a subject divided by its inability to incorporate or be equal to the guests it receives, whose alterity resists recognition" (xlv).

Such readings exist often in a vacuum, uninformed by the larger biblical or rabbinical canons. She links Jael and Judith, representatives of a new attitude toward hospitality, too neatly to the revelation of the Decalogue as an event in which Israel is presented "as the feminized wife of God . . . structurally inadequate or unequal to the exigencies of his law" (xlv–xlvi). This becomes more problematic as McNulty picks up speed, substituting reliance on theory for grounding in the read text, as when she attempts to trace this transformed notion of hospitality through Paul and the "church fathers," of whom only Augustine is invoked.

As is characteristic of her lineage, McNulty evokes as much as she argues, and marginal readings accumulate, scintillating but often demanding deeper engagement—First Lady Hillary Clinton villainized as a Lady MacBeth; the

relation between Immanuel Kant's economic model, in *Project for Perpetual Peace*, of foreign other as "guest" within a sovereign nation and problems of "guest workers" in Germany and elsewhere today; the Holocaust as "grotesque literalization of Augustine's allegorical call to defend the City of God against the 'heathenous' Israelites" (77).

Locating the closed model of hospitality adopted by post-Decalogue Israel in modern secular thought (hence the treatment of Kant), McNulty meanwhile chronicles an evolution in philosophy that aligns itself with the hospitality of Abraham and Sarah, sympathetic to Lacanian analysis, and prepares the way for Lacan himself. Friedrich Nietzsche is key here, skewering secular metaphysics for its inability "to separate itself from onto-theology when it comes to the concept of identity" (175). The "death of God" is ultimately a claim for a Lacanian schema, a recognition of the gaping maw of alterity, the symbolic order unmasked as a fiction. It is in this regard that the book is truly useful, and McNulty's readings (including two rich chapters on Pierre Klossowski, attention to a famous toggling paragraph in Sigmund Freud, and a crystalline critique of Sade's work as revaluation by locating in Nature a "'law beyond all laws' whose authority is grounded in the real and not on the signifier" [185–86])) all serve the goal of expanding upon and explaining Lacan's thought. As a practical application of and explication on these theories, McNulty's book, written with a contagious enthusiasm for its subject, is a necessary read for thinking about religion after Nietzsche or Freud.

SPENCER DEW, *Chicago, Illinois*.

HUMPHRIES-BROOKS, STEPHENSON. *Cinematic Savior: Hollywood's Making of the American Christ*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006. x+159 pp. \$39.95 (cloth).

When the review copy of Stephenson Humphries-Brooks's *Cinematic Savior* crossed my desk, my first reaction was, "Oh dear, another book on Jesus figures in film! How many more do we need?" But after judging the book by the cover, I was pleasantly surprised. Humphries-Brooks offers a different take from the dozen other similarly themed books from the last ten years.

The cinema industry in the United States (or "Hollywood") has created Christ in its own American image. By looking at various representations of Jesus on film over the last eighty years, Humphries-Brooks suggests, we learn not just about film but also about U.S. cultural history since 1920. It is not clear why 1920 is the starting point, especially since that elides Sidney Olcott's *From the Manger to the Cross* (1913) and Thomas Edison's very early *Passion Play* (1898), but he does convince us that Cecil B. DeMille's 1927 *King of Kings* was the first "truly American Christ" (9).

Humphries-Brooks smartly sets out by contrasting DeMille's *King of Kings* with Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), suggesting that each was produced at "critical junctures of American history": the former at the "height of American industrialization"; the latter at the "height of American power" in general (2). These two films form the bookends for the book's eight chapters. The focus of the middle chapters is taken up by *King of Kings* (Nicholas Ray, 1961), *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (George Stevens, 1965), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Norman Jewison, 1973), *Jesus of Nazareth* (Franco Zeffirelli, 1977, TV miniseries), and *The Last Temptation of Christ* (Martin Scorsese, 1988). Each serves as something of a time capsule, allowing contemporaries to uncover and

rethink the evolving image of Jesus in U.S. culture. Along the way, societal issues of anti-Semitism and gender are tackled alongside theological issues of Jesus's divinity and humanity. Through these films, Humphries-Brooks tells a particular, even if truncated, history of modern U.S. culture and its Christian-oriented religiosity. DeMille's early piece tells us of "a profound uneasiness with divine intervention into the normal historical world" (21), while, for example, Stevens's later *Greatest Story* tells of the "exhaustion of modern liberal Protestant mainstream America" (53).

The seventh chapter, "How Jesus Got a Gun," is to my mind the most interesting, and it seems to be at the heart of why Humphries-Brooks wrote this book. Jesus films in the latter twentieth century increasingly depict him as a "hero." Here *Ben-Hur* and *Spartacus*, alongside the genres of the Western and science fiction, enter the fold, blending in protoreligious ways. What emerges from the mixture is a uniquely American Christ as action hero. And it is Gibson's *Passion* that becomes the final culminating point, at least for now.

The strength of *Cinematic Savior* stems from the way it refrains from basing its critique in "adaptation," in how well the films hold up to the literary accounts found in the Gospels. Instead, even though Humphries-Brooks was trained in the Gospels, he wisely sets his readings within a reception history of Jesus films themselves, suggesting that students and other contemporaries receive their understandings and images of Jesus from Hollywood more than from the Gospels, Church teachings, or more traditional iconography.

Nonetheless, his historical training gets the better of him at times, and he seems to be unable to help himself at the start of the seventh chapter when he states, "Had the Jesus of previous Hollywood versions been faithfully and fundamentally based on scriptural and other traditional religious sources and little else, we would not have become used to so much embroidery, editing, and variation in the evolution of representations of Jesus, and the Christ figure would not so easily or so manifestly have become a stand-in for America's own idealized version of itself" (101). I do not know what sort of understanding of Scriptures and "traditional religious sources" would pretend to have nothing to do with embroidery or editing, but it seems to me that what Jesus films actually highlight is the fact that it is all embroidered and edited.

Even so, *Cinematic Savior* is a provocative work at the intersection of Christianity, popular culture, and visual culture. It would make a fine primer for a course on Jesus in film, and I would recommend it as such. One supplement would be to think of Jesus films made from outside the United States in order to think differently about the "American Jesus" in relation to that ancient Palestinian figure.

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KAWANO, SATSUKI. *Ritual Practice in Modern Japan: Ordering Place, People, and Action*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005. viii+152 pp. \$42.00 (cloth); \$17.00 (paper).

Ritual Practice in Modern Japan is a slim volume—only 120 pages of text. Based on fourteen months of participant-observation of the ritual lives of inhabitants of Kamakura, Kawano's work offers readers a modest and less-than-original thesis: in contemporary Japan, ritual forms of praxis "can create an elevated context infused with a sense of moral order pervasive in daily life" (2). Most

readers will find Ian Reader and George J. Tanabe Jr.'s *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998) a more thorough and satisfying study.

Readers familiar with contemporary Japanese culture will find Kawano's observations largely accurate but unremarkable. So will students of ritual and the ritualization process. The author invokes the names of major theorists of ritual—Catherine Bell, Maurice Bloch, Pierre Bourdieu, Thomas Csordas, Mary Douglas, Clifford Geertz, Marshall Sahlins, Jonathan Z. Smith—but only in a superficial manner. Readers expecting a detailed ethnographic study in which Japanese examples are used to test the competing and conflicting theories of these scholars will be disappointed. Rather, Kawano usually cites only one or two works from the oeuvre of a scholar in passing, much like an advanced undergraduate or beginning MA student might do. Readers will learn little about the subtle and nuanced thinking of these scholars; knowledgeable readers will be put off by the simplistic treatment. Diverse points culled from a cursory reading are stitched together by Kawano to support a hodgepodge of claims about ritual in Japan today and ritual more generally. Not surprisingly, the result is disappointing.

Chapter 1, "Kami, Buddhas, and Ancestors," is a cursory sixteen-page survey of domestic rituals in some Japanese homes. Chapter 2, "Embodying Moral Order: Acting Bodies and the Power of Ritual," is an equally superficial look (15 pp.) at ritual acts of bowing, cleaning, purification, offering, the clapping of hands and the joining of hands in prayer, the chanting of sutras, and so on. Chapter 3, "Emplacing Moral Order: Ritual and Everyday Environments," briefly surveys spatial aspects of the lived environment. Chapter 4, "Constructing Kamakura in Everyday Life and City Festivals," and chapter 5, "The Sakae Festival," shift the focus to large-scale public rituals and competing images of the city. This is followed by a six-page conclusion, recapitulating the author's main points.

As the chapter titles indicate, moral order is a primary theme of this study, yet the treatment of this topic is flat. One senses that Kawano was searching for something like the phrase "a sense of propriety" to describe exactly the mood that everyday ritualized acts produce. Extensive and sensitive ethnographic work has been done on the "poetics" and "politics" of everyday life in traditional societies, yet little of this work is in evidence here. Kawano's work too often idealizes a traditional Japanese sense of propriety without seriously grappling with the constructed and contested nature of this sense. To be sure, à la Jennifer Robertson (*Native and Newcomer: Making and Remaking of a Japanese City* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991]), Kawano notes some tensions between longtime residents of Kamakura and newcomers, as well as class differences and different rates of participation in neighborhood festivals between different occupational groups. But these are simply noted rather than critically analyzed. For instance, one wishes for a serious explication of why white-collar families generally abstain from participating in neighborhood festivals, which are dominated by small merchants.

Similarly, observations such as the following beg for further investigation: "Shopkeepers and small-scale artisans clearly set themselves apart from the giant supermarkets. The tea merchant's wife told me over and over that opening the shop early is a sign of dedication and professionalism. She is critical of shopkeepers on her street who open at ten, the normal hour for large-scale retailers" (96). Alas, one hears little more about how economic changes (and

even global capitalism) have affected the *shita-machi* or small-merchant neighborhood sense of propriety. Surely, white-collar workers and the small shopkeepers who now open at 10:00 a.m. instead of at 6:00 have their own sense of propriety, yet their voices are never heard here. As a result, Kawano implicitly privileges a constructed traditional way of life, at times even slipping into a soft nostalgia for this past.

But then, what should one expect in such a slight study? Only if one's expectations are minimal will *Ritual Practice in Modern Japan* be found satisfying. GARY L. EBERSOLE, *University of Missouri–Kansas City*.

VEIDLINGER, DANIEL M. *Spreading the Dhamma: Writing, Orality, and Textual Transmission in Buddhist Northern Thailand*. Southeast Asia: Politics, Meaning, and Memory. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006. 259 pp. \$52.00 (cloth).

The advent of printing technologies has made Dhamma books available to many and enabled the dissemination of translated Buddhist texts for independent use; nevertheless, even today, in many rural and urban Buddhist communities, Buddhist texts and teachings are initially encountered aurally. How may this aural reception and the oral transmission of texts be understood in the context of a literate culture, and how and why did such a culture emerge? How might an environment that prizes both oral transmission and written technologies help us to understand the nature of the spread of Buddhism and how it has been experienced by Buddhists of the past?

In this book, Daniel M. Veidlinger seeks to explore these and other questions in the context of Lan Na, the “million rice fields” area of northern Thailand. Until recently, the culturally and linguistically distinct Lan Na was very much the understudied poor relation to the dominant central Thai. There are signs that this is changing, with a recent flourishing of publications addressing the area's colorful and rich history and unique Buddhist heritage. The recent appearance of Sarassawadee Ongsakul's wonderfully thorough *History of Lan Na* in English translation (Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2005) and the translations of Donald Swearer, Sommai Premchit, and Phaitoon Dokbuakaew (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998; Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2004) are happy evidence that the study of Lan Na is establishing itself as a discipline in its own right. A most welcome addition to this growing body of literature is Veidlinger's first book, an adaptation of his doctoral thesis, in which he seeks to establish just when and how a literate culture emerged in Lan Na, why it flourished, and how it was affected by political and historical events. Veidlinger states at the outset that the study aims to create an “accurate . . . chronology of the development and expansion of written culture in the region” and also to “paint a picture of what that culture entailed” (13).

The book mainly focuses on the manuscript collections documented in Lan Na, mostly as maintained by the Social Research Institute of Chiang Mai, but it also draws on the collections of Thai and international libraries. It is almost impossible to extract the “Buddhist” subject matter from this kind of material, as at all turns we see Buddhism interacting with people, places, and history and with sciences and other fields of knowledge, through the spread of relics and ordination lineages, temple building, and so on. Indeed, it is to Veidlinger's credit that he explores the ebb and flow of political and royal patronage of the various monastic orders and in so doing highlights the fact that even

so-called forest dwelling monks were often engaged in politics at the highest level.

The book takes an overall chronological approach in seeking to date the emergence of writing in Lan Na, the nature of this emergence, and its relation to the oral/aural tradition. The introduction deals with media theory relevant to the study, and though this has the feel of “the theory chapter” now compulsory to doctoral theses, it nevertheless places the study in a larger critical framework, something that often cannot be said for text-centered Buddhist studies. The main source material for the study is four *tamnan*, chronicles that relate local history, particularly the arrival and spread of Buddha *sāsanā*. These are the *Cāmadevivamsa*, the *Jinakālamālipakaraṇam*, the *Tamnan Mūlasāsanā*, and the *Pa Daeng Chronicle*. It also draws upon local tellings of *jātaka* stories and locally produced canonical and semicanonical texts, such as the *Milinda-panḥa* (55–56). Of particular importance to the development of literate culture in Lan Na was the earlier Mon Buddhist culture. Lan Na was also subject to two exchanges with Sri Lanka in 1355 and 1423 CE, and Veidlinger argues that the resulting order of forest-dwelling *arañṇavāsī* monks was central to the emerging literary explosion. He makes the case that, contrary to some traditional accounts, monks did not actually bring “writing” back with them from their trip to Sri Lanka, in the form of Tipi-taka or other manuscripts in Sinhala or related script; instead, they brought the “knowledge of the importance of writing and an appreciation for the technology of manuscript production, but not manuscripts themselves” (75).

Veidlinger shows that, although writing came to be used all over Lan Na, for all manner of texts, it never attained the same prestige or patronage that it did in Burma or Sri Lanka. He calculates that scribes in Lan Na were paid less per book than Sri Lankans were paid for a single page (131)! It is interesting to note that he finds virtually no evidence of “cultic” treatments of texts, which we know to have been a feature elsewhere, particularly within Mahayana Buddhism.

It is hard to do justice to the scope and ambition of this study in a short review. While it will doubtless be welcomed by scholars with a specific interest in Lan Na, its appeal should extend to students of Buddhism in its many historical and cultural settings. Veidlinger’s impressive research combined with an engaging and refreshing writing style make for an important book that is also that most welcome thing: an enjoyable read.

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BUCKLEY, JORUNN JACOBSEN. *The Mandaean: Ancient Texts and Modern People*. American Academy of Religion: The Religions Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. xi+200 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).

The Mandaean can be found today on nearly every continent, since many of them have left their old homelands (Iran and Iraq) as a result of the military entanglements in the Gulf region and have built new communities in especially Europe, Australia, and the United States. It is therefore to be saluted when their tradition and culture are introduced in an easily accessible book designed to improve the knowledge of this unique Near Eastern religion originating in the pre-Islamic era. Because Buckley belongs to the few specialists in this field—to my knowledge she is the only one in the United States—the present

publication deserves particular attention, even when parts of it have already appeared in professional journals. What is special about this book is that the author attempts to include, in the historical presentation, her personal encounter with Mandaean in the United States and Iran (already the preface [vii-ix] commences with her first meeting with Mandaean in Iran in 1973). This alternation of yesterday (history) and today (description of personal experiences) runs through the whole book and is explicitly intentional (cf. 18ff.). "I do not aim to present a complete portrait of the Mandaean religion. Rather, through chosen frameworks, this book tries to show how and why Mandaeanism works the way it does, in thoughtful action and practical thought. It is with an eye to Mandaeanism's wider, more general usefulness as an example of how a religion creates itself that I offer what follows" (18). This disposition to an "existential" understanding (with reference to Heidegger[19]) or to the practice of ethnology, which Buckley repeatedly has emphasized, is in general useful when one allows for it. Nevertheless, it of course cannot lead to dismissing as "outdated" other historical-critical approaches (cf. 7), for these also serve our knowledge of life and ideology. The dominant regard to ritual in religion is accentuated again and again precisely by historians and for me a ground rule for dealing with religions.

The book has three parts: "Beginnings," "Rituals," "Native Hermeneutics," which in turn are divided into fourteen chapters, of which seven are reworked reprints (cf. overview [iv]). Part 1 (2-56) deals with "Origins and Glimpses of History," the characteristics of the Mandaean religion and its literature. Buckley sees in the Mandaean teaching a relative homogeneous doctrine of "Baptist Gnostics," which on the basis of colophons can be traced back to the second century CE and which originates probably in the Jordan area (4ff., 157ff.). She thus follows R. Macuch and myself, but she does not mention the new discussions about Babylonian origins based on the incantation bowls (cf. Christa Müller-Kessler, "The Question of the Origin of the Mandaean," *ARAM* 16 [2004]: 47-60). Of further interest is the report on the fate of Mandaean exiles from Iraq in California, among whom is the well-known Iraqi poet Lamaa Abbas Amara (21-34). The following chapters repeat older writings about the Mandaean savior Shitil (cf. *Numen* 26 [1979]: 185-91), the figure of Ruha (cf. *History of Religions* 22 [1982]: 60-84; the subject of Buckley's 1978 Chicago dissertation) and that of Miriai (cf. *Novum Testamentum* 35 [1993]: 181-96), behind whom probably is hidden an anti-Christian interpretation of Jesus's mother.

The second part is dedicated to the rituals (59-109), namely, baptism (*masbuta*), which Buckley attended several times in Iran (67ff.); the "Masiqta of the parents (*tabahata*)," a ceremony of souls that is conducted only during the feast of the end of the year (*panja*), and which Lady Drower has described (87ff.; reprint of *Numen* 28 [1981]: 138-68); and the priestly ordination called "coronation" (99ff.; cf. *Numen* 32 [1982]: 194-217).

In the last part, "Native Hermeneutics" (111-63), Buckley paints three encounters with Mandaean in New York in 1995 and depicts their views on their religion and their practices (113-29). She also portrays several interesting examples from the Mandaean tradition and their esoteric exegesis, such as the peculiar interpretation of Hibil's or Dinanukht's body (130-33, with illustration); the "Interpretative Strategies in The Scroll of Exalted Kingship," a text that Buckley originally published in 1993 (134-43); the little-known "Mandaean Language Games and Obstacles" (144-60); and, finally, she provides an

insight into the “Thousands of Names, Hundreds of Lineages” of the colophons (*tarik*) in the Mandaean manuscripts, to which the author has fruitfully been devoted since the eighties (153–60). These lists contain not only data about the copyists and their families but often also report on local incidents (e.g., pogroms [154ff.]) that we obtain only here. When the data are correct, the tradition can be traced back to the second century CE through some manuscript copies. At the end, Buckley places a poem from Lamea Abbas Amara, named Frouzanda Mahrada (161–63).

In addition to the annotation, the book contains a glossary, a bibliography, and an index of names and facts. One hopes that this handy introduction to the, until now, little-known world of an old religious tradition and its current representatives receives the necessary attention. Unfortunately, the public does not hear anything of its ancestral land, Iraq, which at present is a theater of war that, as before, is endangering the local community.

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MOLESKY-POZ, JEAN. *Contemporary Maya Spirituality: The Ancient Ways Are Not Lost*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006. xx+201 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).

Jean Molesky-Poz elucidates the “argument of antiquity” as used by Maya in their claims for legitimacy. Drawing on theories of public performance, identity emergence, and dialogical method, Molesky-Poz examines the new public character of non-Christian religious practices and beliefs of Guatemalan highland Maya in light of Catholic contextual theology and the social space opened by the 1996 Peace Accords. Her iterative question, however, is anthropological: according to the Maya, what does it mean to be human? In addition to relying on history and the social sciences, Molesky-Poz also recognizes that Mayan identity involves spirituality. This spirituality, for her, is a first-order discourse articulated concretely in rituals and quotidian practices in response to an other, as well as the Other. In this regard, she strives to understand Mayan concepts on their own terms while interfacing her interviews and observations with findings from other disciplines. In the end, she aims to highlight an ontological concern of being human, contribute to a Mayan theology, and advance wider respect for indigenous spirituality.

Molesky-Poz bases most of her findings on fieldwork carried out in the far western highlands of Guatemala among K'iche' speaking Maya. While her primary consultants are non-Christian practitioners of Mayan spirituality, Molesky-Poz also relies on interviews with Catholic Maya (priests and laity), non-Maya Catholics (mostly Jesuits) invested in contextual theologies, and European converts to Mayan spirituality. Notably absent are interviews with other national associations of Mayan spiritual guides, especially non-K'iche' Maya or those hard-line Maya highly critical of both non-Maya practitioners and the churches' contextual work. Presumably Molesky-Poz aims to represent a Mayan spirituality as it has endured for five hundred years, not because of but despite institutionalized Christianity, albeit currently aided by inculturation theology. To broaden her findings historically and outside of her relatively small sample group, Molesky-Poz relies on archaeological and ethnographic works from across the Mayan area.

Methodologically, Molesky-Poz draws heavily from Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of “dialogical” for a model of alterity and applies this model toward under-

standing Mayan tradition as a continuity of ever-changing, multiple meanings and as a framework attuned to ethical, aesthetical, and cognitive aspects of Mayan culture. Appropriately, she interweaves her own connections with lengthy quotes and illustrations from Mayan consultants, choosing wisely not to relegate them to endnotes. Molesky-Poz is justified in using Bakhtin given his influence on anthropology's hermeneutical turn; however, the rationale for her choice of Karl Rahner as primary theological lens is less evident. (A case could be made for this choice, given Rahner's influence on Central American Jesuits and their take on existentialism and ontology, but she does not make it.) Moreover, she does not use Rahner as adeptly as she does Bakhtin. In general, much of Molesky-Poz's theological concepts—for example, ground of being, praxis, and mystery—remain ill-defined and her analysis vague.

Substantively, Molesky-Poz acknowledges that Maya not only now read foreign scholars but publish their own work on spirituality. However, she postpones any critical engagement with Mayan statements until her conclusion. Thus, despite a purportedly dialogical approach, her critical concerns remain open questions with no Mayan responses. Incorporating a Mayan response could have opened a critical engagement with her own assumptions. As it stands, the overemphasis of "self" with Bakhtin's alterity, the link between antiquity and legitimacy, and the priority of interreligious dialogue she assigns to the Maya, remain uncontested.

Two major technical problems further weaken the book. First, there are inconsistent spellings in both K'iche' and Spanish as well as an equivocation between *enculturation* and *inculturation*. Second, there are flaws between her use of the ethnographic record and her analysis, such as inconsistencies in rendering *Wajxaqib' B'atz'* as a "new year's day," interpreting the 260-day calendar almost strictly metaphorically rather than mnemonically, and equating Abrahamic concepts of good/evil with Mayan notions of positive/negative. More serious discrepancies directly obscure her arguments, such as valuing "cultural inheritance" while relying on European converts to Mayan spirituality as consultants or insisting on the nonsyncretic uniqueness of Mayan spirituality while describing rituals as hybrids.

Despite these problems, Jean Molesky-Poz's book distinguishes itself as among the first on Mayan religion to incorporate theology into an interdisciplinary analysis using the social sciences and interpretation theory. With the recent public character and institutionalization of Mayan spirituality and the increase in Mayan ministerial leaders in the Catholic and Protestant churches, competency in both a Mayan language and theology are necessary for effective interdisciplinary work. While recent Mayanists have begun to take the former more seriously, Molesky-Poz's book represents a bold initial step in the second and more neglected of these gaps. Unfortunately, her book stumbles in this effort over problems in both its theological lens and its anthropological method.

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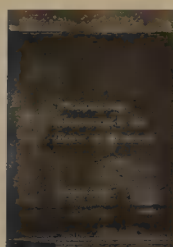
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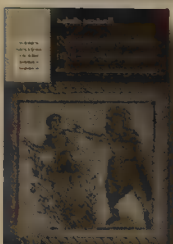
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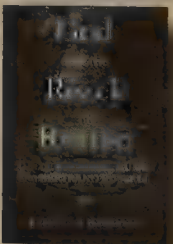
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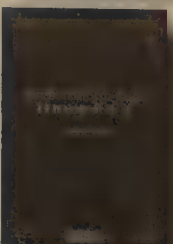


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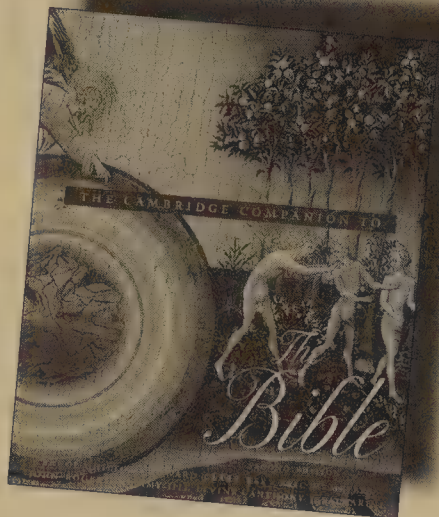
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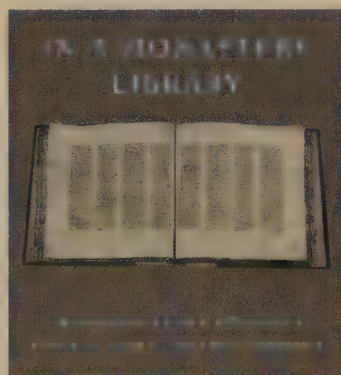
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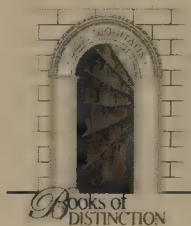


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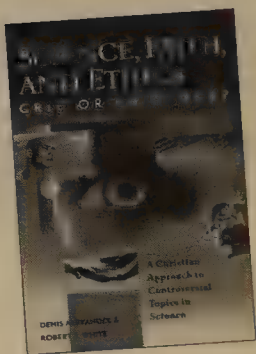
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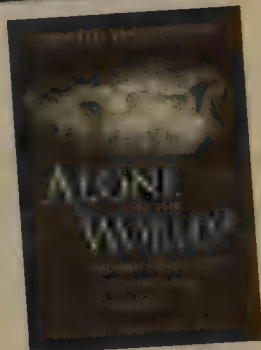
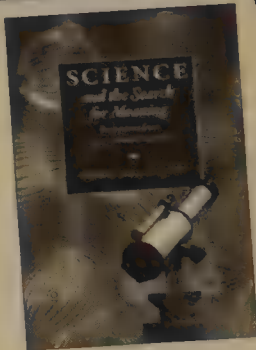
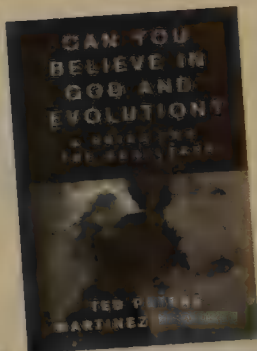
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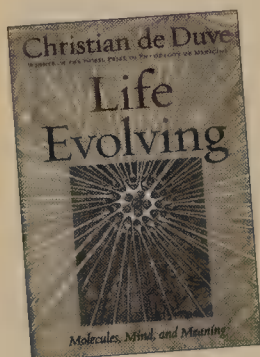
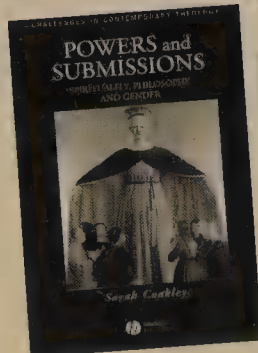
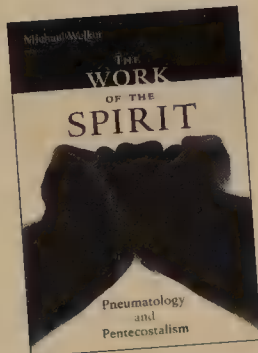
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